Popular Commentary of the Bible

Old Testament
Vol. I

PAUL E. KRETZMANN

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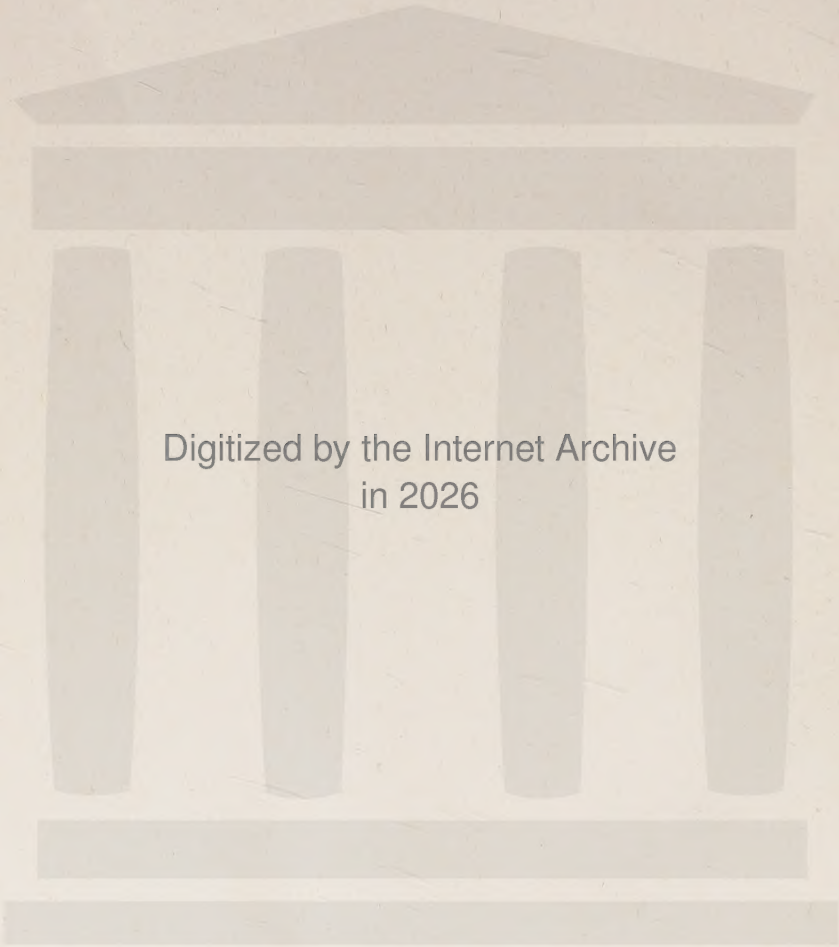

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Popular Commentary of the Bible

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Volume I

The Historical Books of the Old Testament: Genesis to Esther

By

PAUL E. KRETZMANN, Ph. D., D. D.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Our Literary Board of 1918 initiated this undertaking and, after very mature consideration, nominated the author and drafted the general character and scope of this POPULAR COMMENTARY. Accordingly Prof. Paul E. Kretzmann, Ph. D., D. D., was called from the position of instructor at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn., in 1919 and has been continuously engaged in the preparation of the manuscript for this COMMENTARY ever since. At the present time, April, 1923, he is writing the concluding chapters on the Old Testament, the two volumes on the New Testament having been published in 1921 and 1922, respectively. Credit is due not only to the Literary Board (Prof. Theo. Graebner, chairman, Prof. J. H. C. Fritz, Rev. L. Buchheimer, Rev. W. F. Wilk; later succeeded by Rev. A. Doerffler and Mr. E. Seuel), but also to Professors E. Pardieck and J. T. Mueller, who, on behalf of the theological faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, critically read the manuscripts and the proof-sheets. The author also acknowledges with thanks the cooperative and suggestive assistance of other living authorities besides the authors whose books he quotes, or the results of whose literary labor he has condensed or quoted. The reader is here referred to the preface written by Prof. J. T. Mueller for Vol. I of the New Testament.

Reviewers of the volumes of this work which preceded this present volume in time of publication have labeled it a Lutheran commentary. If correctly understood, we are proud to accept this designation. It is, indeed, not a Lutheran commentary in the sense that it comments on the Bible with a view to establishing the Lutheran doctrines, though, as a matter of fact, it does establish the Lutheran doctrine from the Bible; it is not a Lutheran commentary in the sense that it starts with Lutheran beliefs and proves them from the Bible, though, as a matter of fact, it does prove the Lutheran beliefs from the Bible; but it is a Lutheran commentary in the sense that it starts with the Bible and ends with the Bible, as did Luther and as do all conservative Christians, such as the Lutherans are or should be. It is a Lutheran commentary in the sense that all Lutheran users will be grateful for the fact that their Lutheran sense of propriety and their Lutheran reverence for the inspired writings of the Bible are not offended by trivialities, or worse, by the promulgation of hypotheses and deductions in opposition to the dicta of the Holy Spirit. It is a Lutheran commentary in the sense that it proclaims the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as Luther and Lutherans have found it in the Bible — truths that are truths not because they are Lutheran, but truths that are Lutheran because they are Biblical. The publishers expect to market this COMMENTARY principally among Lutherans, though the publishers would fain find their principal sales among non-Lutherans.

God's blessing has manifestly been with the author and with the publishers during the preparation of this book. May His blessing abide with the book and its users!

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THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Genesis (beginning) is the first of five books known collectively as the Pentateuch, which the many Scriptural references in the later books of the Old Testament as well as those of the New Testament compel us to ascribe to the authorship of Moses. In the Book of Genesis the inspired author presents a record of the origin of the world, of the human race, of the institution of marriage, of the beginning of sin, of the first judgment of God upon a sinful world, of the first preaching of the Gospel, and of the beginning of the chosen race as the bearers of the Messianic prophecies.

Moses, the author of the Book of Genesis, was the son of Amram, a member of the tribe of Levi, and his wife Jochebed, as recorded in Exodus, chaps. 2 and 6. He was born in Egypt, at the time when the rise of a new dynasty had caused the deeds of Joseph to be forgotten and the new Pharaoh had laid upon the children of Israel such intolerable burdens as ever a nation was obliged to bear. By God's dispensation his own mother became his nurse after his parents had found it impossible to keep him at home any longer, Ex. 2, 8. 9. In this way Moses was instructed in the history and the religion of his people, and although he afterward, as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he remained true to Jehovah, the God of his fathers. From the land of Midian, whither Moses had fled from the wrath of Pharaoh, the Lord called him to be the deliverer and the leader of the children of Israel, and he served in this capacity for somewhat more than forty years, until he had brought the people to the boundaries of Canaan, where he appointed Joshua as his successor, went up on Mount Nebo, where God showed him the entire country which his people were to possess, died there, and was buried by the Lord Himself. — Moses probably wrote the Book of Genesis some time during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, and God not only inspired him to write, but also revealed to him most of the matter that is contained in the account, since tradition would, at best, have been extremely unreliable and many events could not have been known but by the special revelation of the Lord.

The Book of Genesis may be divided according to various points of view. The simplest division is that into two parts, chaps. 1—11 recording the beginnings of all history to the confusion of tongues, and chaps. 12—50 showing how God paved the way for the establishment of the theocracy as it afterward existed for a number of centuries. Some commentators prefer the division into six chief parts, chaps. 1—5 dealing mainly with Adam, chaps. 6—11 with Noah, chaps. 12—24 with Abraham, chaps. 25—27 with Isaac, chaps. 28—36 with Jacob, and chaps. 37—50 with Joseph.

The period of which the Book of Genesis treats begins with the creation of man and ends with the Flood, comprising some 1,700 years. Though there is no valid reason for assuming that the art of writing had not been developed by the people of the world at that time, recent discoveries indicating, rather, that the art of writing was a common accomplishment in the East as early as the time of Abraham, in fact, that large libraries were then in existence, there was no urgent need of recording the Word of God at that time, since the patriarchs lived to a very great age and were able to pass on what God had revealed to them by word of mouth, from generation to generation. The record shows, for instance, that Adam lived for fifty-six years after Lamech, the father of Noah, had been born. This providential arrangement continued for some time after the Flood; for Abraham was born 150 years before the death of Shem and surely profited by his instruction. The period from the Flood till the death of Joseph is that of the patriarchs proper, and covers a space of some six hundred years. At its close the chosen family of Abraham had multiplied into a numerous people.

The modern student of the Bible will find in the Book of Genesis abundant evidence of the providential working of God in the destinies of mankind. Above all, however, the Christian will follow with the greatest interest the Messianic types and prophecies which appear even thus early in the Holy Scriptures; for just as the entire New Testament looks back to Christ, thus the entire Old Testament looks forward to Christ. Jesus is the center of all divine revelation.

CHAPTER 1.

The Creation of the World.

THE CREATION OF CHAOS AND LIGHT. — V. 1. **In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.** In the beginning, cp. John 1, 1, that is, when time first began, when time was first measured; for as long as God alone existed, there was no time. God created, He brought forth out of nothing, He brought into being something that had not been in existence before, namely, the heaven, or heavens, and the earth, the material out of which they were constructed. V. 2. **And the earth was without form and void.** The material substance of which the earth consists was in a state of chaos, the various elements being intermingled in utter disorder. **And darkness was upon the face of the deep.** There was, as yet, no elemental light; the great sea of the chaotic materials was covered with an impenetrable veil of the blackest darkness. **And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.** The third person of the Holy Trinity is represented as taking part in the work of creation by way of brooding over the waters, by making use of His divine power in causing the elements to combine in the form which they now have. V. 3. **And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.** God spoke; the almighty Word of God is here introduced, the second person of the Godhead, John 1, 3. The creation of the world is a work of the Triune God. By the word of His power He created light, elemental light, brought it into being in the midst of the darkness, commanded it to shine out of darkness, 2 Cor. 4, 6. V. 4. **And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.** The light was good, it was a perfect creature of God's almighty power; and so God separated between the light and the darkness, so that they were no longer in a chaotic state. V. 5. **And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.** Time had begun for the earth, and therefore the Lord made this rule for the division of light and darkness, as they follow each other in regular order, and did so even before the creation of the light-bodies. He Himself defined the unit of time which He thus ordered. **And the evening and the morning were the first day.** And there was evening, when the darkness had ruled alone, and there was morning, when God's almighty power created light and separated it from the darkness. Ever since the first day of the world the regular recurrence of darkness and light marks the period of one day, as we now divide it into twenty-four hours. This is the fundamental meaning of the Hebrew word here used, which must be assumed even Ps. 90, 4 (cp. 2 Pet. 3, 8), where the Lord accommodates Himself to human speech and limitations, for the sake of comparison.

THE CREATION OF THE FIRMAMENT. — V. 6. **And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.** God's almighty word continued to create on the second day. He caused a firm extension, or expansion, to be fixed in the midst of the waters, in the chaos where liquid and vapor were intermingled with the more solid substances. The purpose of this firmament was to keep separate the waters from the waters, as the text next explains. V. 7. **And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so.** Although there is no concrete, visible vault of the sky, yet there is an invisible dividing-wall above the earth, which under ordinary conditions holds back the masses of water in gaseous form which are high above the visible clouds. Cp. chap. 7, 11. V. 8. **And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.** God Himself applied the name heaven, or heavens, to the invisible dividing-wall which separates the waters below from the waters above. Thus the work of the second day was accomplished.

THE CREATION OF THE DRY LAND, HERBS, AND TREES. — V. 9. **And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.** God here finished His creative work on inanimate matter, when His almighty command bade the waters from below the heavens, below the firmament which He had constructed, be gathered together into a single place, by themselves. In chaos the mixture of solids and liquids had been so complete as to preclude the designation "dry land." But now both the solids and the liquids were to be separated, so that dry land, as we know it, was visible. V. 10. **And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas. And God saw that it was good.** There had been no chemical compound, but a mere mixture of solid and liquid particles in the mass composing chaos. The division took place at God's almighty command, and the dry land was henceforth known as earth, while the places on the earth's surface where the waters had come together into large masses were called seas or oceans. And again God saw that the product of His almighty power was good, that it exactly served the purpose for which it was intended. V. 11. **And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth. And it was so.** The dry land having emerged from the waters, it was now possible, by God's command, for the earth to be clothed with vegetation, with green, tender grass, with small

plants bearing seeds, and with trees of all kinds that bear fruit. As the Lord gave to the earth the power to bring forth the plants, so He placed into the plants the power to propogate their kind by bearing seed and fruit. V. 12. **And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind. And God saw that it was good.** The mature plants were thus brought into being by the word of God's power, fully able to reproduce their kind and species by means of seed and fruit. It was not a gradual generation, as under the present laws of nature, but the fully developed specimens were brought forth by the earth as God's creative work, altogether fit to take their place in the universe. This ended the work of the third day. V. 13. **And the evening and the morning were the third day.**

THE CREATION OF SUN, MOON, AND STARS. — V. 14. **And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.** The Creator brought into being light-bodies of the sky, assigning to them a threefold function: to show the distinction between day and night, to serve as indicators or means for men, enabling them to distinguish between the two divisions of the full day; to serve for signs, not only as in the case of ordinary eclipses, but also as omens extraordinary; and to fix the calendar of the world in general. And not only that: V. 15. **And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And it was so.** That is the third function of the heavenly light-bodies, to send forth the light, either their own or that reflected by them, to be light-bearers for the earth. No sooner had God spoken than it was done; for it was not an ordinary work done by Him, but an act of creation. V. 16. **And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.** Although the names are not expressly mentioned, it is obvious that the greater light is the sun, which, by its light and power, governs the day, has the most profound influence upon organic and inorganic life, and the smaller light the moon, which governs the night and the life of the night in much the same way as the sun does by day. Likewise, God on this day filled the immense reaches of the universe with the countless number of stars. V. 17. **And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,** v. 18. **and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.** God's almighty, creative act is again emphasized; for He gave, He put the light-bodies in their proper place, the functions of which are given in the order in which they usually impress men: they give forth light upon the earth; their influence controls day and night, respectively; their rising and setting governs the division of light and darkness. And again, the work of the perfect God was perfect. V. 19. **And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.**

THE CREATION OF MARINE ANIMALS AND BIRDS. — V. 20. **And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.** At God's almighty word the waters were to swarm a swarm of living beings, of marine animals, and also of winged animals, characterized by the fact that they fly over the earth on the face of the firmament, that is, on the side which is turned toward the earth. These animals were created in great abundance and are conspicuous to this day by their unusually great number, as careful statistics have shown. V. 21. **And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind. And God saw that it was good.** Not only the fishes were made by God to inhabit the seas, but He also created long and huge whales, crocodiles, and other monsters of the oceans and rivers, and every form of marine animal, no matter of what form and nature, with which the waters swarm, and every kind of winged animal, chiefly birds, all of them perfect and exactly adapted to the element in which they found themselves. V. 22. **And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.** As animate beings both the marine animals and those that inhabit the air received a special blessing of the Lord, not in a mere friendly and fatherly greeting, but in the conveyance of the power to reproduce themselves in kind. The fishes were to multiply at such a rate as to fill up all the oceans, and the birds were to become many on the earth. V. 23. **And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.**

THE CREATION OF THE LAND ANIMALS. — V. 24. **And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind. And it was so.** The seas and the air having been filled with living beings, the earth now received the command to bring forth, to permit to go forth, living beasts: animals such as were easily domesticated, reptiles and creeping beasts, and the game of prairie and forest. Without delay the order was carried into execution, the earth opening or unfolding, as it were, and presenting the animals fully grown. V. 25. **And God made the beast of the earth after his kind and cattle after their kind and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his**

kind. And God saw that it was good. The making of these animals is represented as having received the special attention of the Lord in forming the game animals of the earth and the domestic animals, mammals, most of them, and the reptiles of the ground each one after its kind, and each one perfect in its own environment.

THE CREATION AND BLESSING OF MAN. — V. 26. **And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.** Man is the crown of creation; the Triune God held a special council session with Himself, determining to make man in His own image, with a blessed knowledge of the heavenly Father and possessed of a perfect righteousness and holiness. Man was also to have power and government over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the animals in general, in brief, over the whole earth and over every reptile and similar animal that might be creeping on the earth. Thus the relation of man to the animals was clearly stated. V. 27. **So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.** God made an impression of His own essence upon the soul of man, making his intellect keen for the knowledge of Himself, and his will eager to perform only that which was good and righteous. As man and woman, as male and female, God created the two first human beings, the two sexes being a creation of God from the beginning. V. 28. **And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.** Thus was the blessing of the Lord given to man and the power to reproduce his kind according to God's laws transmitted to him. But the fact that God gives to him the power and government over all the animate and inanimate things of the earth indicates that the propagation of the human race is not the process of mere animal reproduction, for man, as the crown of creation, is living on a higher plane. V. 29. **And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.** Having created man, the human race, and provided for their propagation, God also provides the necessary food to sustain their life, the vegetables and seed-bearing plants and the fruit-bearing trees. V. 30. **And to every beast of the earth and to every fowl of the air and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat. And it was so.** That was the food which the Lord had provided and intended for animals of every description, whether mammals or birds or reptiles or any other kind, namely, the tender green grass and vegetation. It follows, then, that neither did man use animal food before the Fall, nor were there any beasts of prey that stalked their prey; they all lived together in perfect harmony and partook of the food which the Lord provided in richest measure. V. 31. **And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.** This is God's own opinion and verdict of the entire work of creation as it was before Him at the end of the sixth day: "Good exceedingly." There was not a single mistake, not even a flaw, in the perfection of God's work.[1])

1) For the discussion of the scientific questions which have come up in connection with Genesis 1, see "Evolution und die Bibel," *Lehre und Wehre*, 1909, Juli ff.; "How Old Is Man?" *Theol. Quart.*, XX, July ff.; Lindberg, *Apologetics;* Gruber, *Whence Came the Universe?* Bettex, *Science and Christianity;* Patterson, *The Other Side of Evolution;* Fairhurst, *Organic Evolution Considered.*

CHAPTER 2.

The Creation of Man, Paradise, and Woman.

THE SABBATH OF CREATION. — V. 1. **Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.** The actual work of creation had been done in six days, all the created beings in heaven and earth, angels, birds, animals, and men, all organic and inorganic matter having been called into being, and men, beasts, and plants having been endowed with the power to reproduce their own kind. V. 2. **And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.** The work of creation did not extend into the seventh day, but was finished at sundown of the sixth day, which marked the beginning of the seventh. God devoted the seventh day to rest after the creative activity of the preceding days. Not that God was tired out, or that He now turned from the world to devote Himself entirely to the enjoyment of the bliss of heaven, but that the work of creation was finished. V. 3. **And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all**

His work which God created and made. In the blessing of the seventh day as a day of rest for Himself and as a type of the great Sabbath of heaven, Heb. 4, 4, God blessed the entire creation, for His blessing is an imparting of the powers of salvation, of mercy, and of peace. And He hallowed, or consecrated, the day, appointing it for His own rest and intending that the peace of the Sabbath should rest upon the world until the eternal Sabbath would continue this rest, Heb. 4, 9. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. God, literally, created His works to make, His divine activity remains in the world in the form of preservation, of providence.

The Creation of Adam. — V. 4. **These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.** The author, having given a short account of the creation, now proceeds to narrate some facts pertaining to it in greater detail. His heading is: This is the further history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, at the time when Jehovah God made earth and heavens. The earth is mentioned first in this case, as the scene of the events about to be related. V. 5. **And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.** This is a description of the earth before Paradise was made. At that time the plants of the field had not yet started to grow, to sprout and to bud; they had not yet matured. There had, till then, been no rain on earth, and the tilling of the soil had not yet begun. V. 6. **But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.** This is the manner in which God provided moisture for the vegetation of the earth at that time, not by means of rain, but by a heavy fog, which arose from the earth and soaked the entire surface of the soil. Having described the earth as the home of man and as the place of his later labors, the author relates the creation of man itself. V. 7. **And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.** This is one distinction of man: Instead of merely being called into being by a word of God's almighty power, he was formed, as it were, by the finger of God, the material being an earth-clod, dust of the soil. This being done, God blew the breath of life into the figure which He had formed. As the dust, by virtue of the creative omnipotence, formed the figure of a man, it was charged with the living breath and thus became a living soul, named after the more important part of which he consists. The Spirit of God has made us, and the breath of the Almighty has given us life, Job 33, 4. This shows the superiority of man over irrational brutes, his being endowed with an immortal soul as well as his being formed in the image of God.

The Garden of Eden. — V. 8. **And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.** Although the entire work of creation was perfect, God chose to do still more for man by planting an enclosed garden, or park, commonly called Paradise, in Eden, a country toward the east. Into this covered and sheltered place the Lord put the man whom He had formed. That was to be his earthly home, a place of wonderful bliss, a fitting vestibule for the eternal home with its unequaled Sabbath rest. V. 9. **And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.** This shows the manner in which the Lord prepared the garden. Jehovah God caused to sprout and grow out of the soil trees of every kind, pleasing to the eye and with fruit that was good for food, the agreeable thus being combined with that promoting health. But, above all, there was in the midst of the garden the tree of life, whose fruit would have given to man perfect health and strength always and thus prepared him for the perfection of eternal life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, placed there for the purpose of testing man; for by obedience to God's command concerning it Adam would retain his concreated righteousness and holiness and progress to the perfection of heavenly bliss, while by disobedience he would become guilty of sin with all its attendant harm. V. 10. **And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.** This great river thus had its beginning in the land of Eden, flowed through the entire length of the garden, and then divided into four beginnings, or heads of streams, which formed separate arms, or rivers. V. 11. **The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;** v. 12. **and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone.** Although the garden of Eden was long since destroyed and the entire contour of the country changed by the great Flood, it is probable that we may assume its location to have been in the central tableland of Asia or Armenia. There was the river Pison, the full-flowing, whose place may now have been taken by the Indus or by the Kur. It flowed through a sandy land, where gold in great quantity and of an excellent quality was found, also bdellium, an odoriferous and very costly gum, and onyx, or sardius, a precious stone which had the color of human finger-nails. V. 13. **And the name of the second river is Gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.**

This river has been identified most plausibly with the Ganges or with the Araxes, and the country which it watered with Kossaia, which extended in a westerly direction to the Caucasus. V. 14. **And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria.** This seems to point quite definitely to the Tigris. **And the fourth river is Euphrates.**

ADAM PLACED INTO THE GARDEN. — V. 15. **And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.** The earthly home of man being ready, he was placed there by Jehovah God to enjoy the peace and the happiness of the garden, but not in a state of inactivity. He was to be the caretaker of the park, to till and develop it, as well as to keep it, probably with reference to an existing power of evil which has as yet not been mentioned. V. 16. **And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat;** v. 17. **but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.** This was a very general permission or command: Of every tree of the garden eating thou shalt eat. There were fruit-trees of every kind in the park, and their fruit was at the disposal of man, even the tree of life with the fruit which was intended to sustain him until the Lord was ready to make his body spiritual and to take him up to heaven. But the prohibition was absolute with regard to the tree of knowledge in the midst of the garden. This tree was placed there for the exercise of man's obedience toward God, and the transgression of God's command would result in man's becoming mortal, becoming subject to death. From the day that he would eat of this forbidden fruit, the germ of death would enter his body, and his final dissolution would be inevitable. If man had stood this test, he would have been confirmed in his possession of Paradise, and through his eating of the tree of life he would finally have been enabled, without pain and death, to enter into the life of eternity. Death is the consequence of disobedience, of sin.

THE LACK OF COMPANIONSHIP FOR MAN. — V. 18. **And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.** A divine decree introduced the creation of man, a divine declaration precedes that of woman. It is a fundamental truth: It is not good for a man to be by himself, without companionship. The life of the anchorite, of the hermit, of the monk, of the nun, is not in agreement with the principle which governs the world. The normal adult person should seek the companionship of marriage, as the Lord stated that He would make for man a help, or helper, that would correspond to himself, be a counterpart of himself. In further explanation it is stated: v. 19. **And out of the ground the Lord formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.** V. 20. **And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.** This is a parenthetical remark, preparing for the next paragraph. This the Lord had done after the creation of man: He had taken the beasts of the field and the birds of the air as they had been called into being from the earth by His almighty word and brought them to man, in order to give to the latter the proper opportunity to exercise his brilliant mind by giving to each animal the name which fitted it, which properly applied to it according to its structure and manner of living. And so great was Adam's understanding, so keen was his mind in penetrating into the marvels of God's creation that he gave to all animals, to the birds as well as to the game animals of the field, the names which distinguished them with the greatest exactness. But among all these there was not one that was his converse, that corresponded to him, that supplemented him. No animal was fit for intimate companionship with man, owing to the entire dissimilarity of body and spirit.

THE CREATION OF WOMAN. — V. 21. **And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof.** Sleep is the natural restorer of man's bodily and mental vigor and not the result of sin. But here was the unusual factor: God purposely caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, thus taking from him all consciousness of the outside world and of his own life. He then removed one of the man's ribs, closing up the vacant space with flesh. V. 22. **And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.** Jehovah God literally built the rib which He took from the side of man into a woman. He did not form a second creature out of the dust of the soil, but created woman out of the rib of Adam, because she is destined to enter into an indissoluble communion with man, because she is to stand at his side as his helpmeet, and because God wanted to make of one blood all nations of men, Acts 17, 26. The Lord also brought the woman to the man, thus signifying that He, in the manner prescribed by Him, brings man and woman together in holy wedlock. V. 23. **And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.** The eagerness of Adam for proper companionship is here expressed: This finally is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. This

is another remarkable instance of Adam's unusual understanding, which caused him to know at once both the origin and the purpose of the woman whom the Lord brought to him. This was the counterpart of himself for whom he had been longing, her name properly being woman, "maness," because from the man, out of the man, she was taken. V. 24. **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.** Whether Adam spoke these words, or whether Moses wrote them in explanation of this wonderful relation which was to obtain between the man and the woman made to be his helpmeet, it was God that inspired them, Matt. 19, 5. When, in the manner approved by God, a man has been given the woman whom God has destined for him, then the tie which binds these two together is so close and so indissoluble that the man will sever the former intimate ties of home and be joined with his wife as her husband, under obligation to observe all the duties that this relationship implies, Eph. 5, 29, even as the wife will be guided in her entire life by God's will, 1 Cor. 11, 8. 9, as the helpmeet of the man. Man and wife are supposed to be united by the ties of common interests, sharing weal and woes, joy and sorrow, as though they were one single person. Note that this excludes the idea of polygamy. V. 25. **And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.** There was no necessity for clothes, either physically or morally, before the Fall. Nakedness is here the expression of perfect innocence, since the bodies of both Adam and his wife were sanctified by the Spirit that lived in them. Shame did not enter until sin came into their hearts and caused desires and lusts to corrupt the pure order of God. It should be noted here, as well as throughout these two chapters, that all theories and idle speculations concerning creation, Paradise, the state of man's integrity must be put aside for the simple truth of Scriptures. What God has not revealed no idle speculation will uncover.

CHAPTER 3.

The Fall of Man and God's Punishment.

The Temptation and Fall. — V. 1. **Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.** In Paradise man had everything that he needed for the proper development of his nature and for the fulfilment of his object in life. But now temptation came to him from outside. Just as in other parts of the Bible animals are characterized by certain physical or mental features, so the serpent is here described as being cunning or crafty by nature, this fact distinguishing it from the other animals of the field. **And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?** The devil, or Satan, chief among the fallen angels, made use of the natural cunning of the serpent and spoke out of her mouth in order to seduce man. The words of the Tempter are: Should God really have made such a statement? or: Even if God did make that statement, — intending to add that such a prohibition on God's part was unbelievable. He is interrupted before he has finished his thought: V. 2. **And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.** The devil had implied that God's command referred to every tree, to all trees of the garden. This appeared especially in the tone and form of questioning surprise, which was intended to excite doubt. The woman corrected this statement by limiting it: Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we eat. That was good enough, as far as it went. But the next words are less positive: V. 3. **But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.** By exaggerating the prohibition of God, the devil intended to shake the woman's trust in God, to create doubts in her heart concerning the truth of His word. He succeeded inasmuch as the woman allowed herself to be drawn into an argument with the Tempter, not only stating that God had forbidden them to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, but adding also: And do not even touch it, lest ye die. This exaggeration of God's command showed that the woman felt it to be harsh and severe, that her love toward God, her trust in God had been undermined. That was the beginning of her sin, the setting aside of God's Word and command; for doubt, unbelief, is the root of all sin. The devil was alert to take advantage of her weakening: V. 4. **And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die;** v. 5. **for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.** Not satisfied with having awakened doubt in the woman's heart, the Tempter now boldly denies the truth of the divine threat and casts suspicion upon the genuineness of the divine love: Ye most assuredly will not die. He insinuates that God is a jealous tyrant, withholding from man some of the advantages to which he was entitled, by means of an empty threat. Instead of becoming subject to death, so the devil asserts, the man and his wife would have their eyes opened for a greater and better understanding of both good and evil. Like untold numbers of tempters since that time, the devil suggested that they

would then be able to choose the good and follow it always, while they would certainly shun that which was wicked. But this condition is not brought about by the transgression of God's commands, for such a course, as in this instance, results in driving the fear, the love, the trust in God away, making the carnal mind enmity toward God. V. 6. **And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.** The evil was done; the woman's heart was turned from the Lord. The lust appeared in her eyes: she saw what had never struck her before, that good was the tree for food as well as pleasant to the eyes. The striving after a false independence and liberty further incited the desire for the forbidden fruit; the longer she looked, the more desirable it seemed to her to gain understanding of the kind which she deemed hidden from her, to feel the pleasure of possessing forbidden secrets. Thus in the heart of natural man, who has turned from God, there grows every form of evil lust and desire, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes. And this lust brings forth sin. The woman took of the fruit and ate. Then, sin having taken her captive, she persuaded her husband to eat of the fruit also. The sinner seeks company and tries to seduce others.

THE INVESTIGATION OF GOD. — V. 7. **And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.** With their transgression, the eyes of the man and woman were indeed opened, but not in the way that they had supposed. The ignorance of primeval innocence was gone. Whereas they had not been aware of their nakedness before, they now felt shame before each other. Sin had corrupted and defiled their entire nature, like the poison of a serpent which penetrates into every part of the body with the circulation of the blood. In their painful embarrassment they sewed together the large leaves of the paradise fig-tree for aprons to gird about their loins. Modesty or bashfulness naturally centers in this part of the body, requiring that the organs through which the impurities of the body are expelled, and which are now defiled for the service of indecency, be covered. V. 8. **And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.** This is related to fit the human understanding, Jehovah God being represented as walking in the garden, at the time when the refreshing wind of evening arose. As soon as they heard His voice calling them in eager search, Adam and his wife hid before the face of God in the midst of the thicket. The sinner has a bad conscience and dreads exposure. But God wanted to visit the sinners that had yielded to disobedience, and perform the work of a true father and educator for them, by making them realize their sin and revealing to them the way of mercy.

The manner in which God dealt with the transgressors of His commandment is now shown. V. 9. **And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou?** It was the call of anxious love as well as of stern justice. God summoned the sinners before His court. Sin is easily done, but not so easily undone, for it weighs down upon conscience as guilt before God, in spite of all attempts at excuse. V. 10. **And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.** Fear, the consciousness of nakedness, shame: they all cried out aloud the guilt of Adam. Though Eve had been the first to sin, the Lord called Adam, because he, as the stronger vessel, was more guilty than his wife; upon him rested the greater responsibility. It was evident that Adam felt the consequences of sin more than its guilt. This state of affairs the Lord proceeds to remedy. V. 11. **And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?** Adam would have remained in the state of blissful innocence if he had not eaten of the forbidden fruit; he would not have known his nakedness. The fact that he was aware of his nakedness was a definite proof of his having transgressed the command of the Lord; for this consciousness came from within and was a mark of his guilt. V. 12. **And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.** This excuse reveals the depravity of Adam's heart, even at this early stage. For he not only tries to place the blame upon the woman, but there is even a charge against God in the words: The woman whom *Thou* didst place at my side. He forgets that he had hailed her coming with delight, and herself as a gift of the Lord. He indicates that the entire matter might not have taken this turn if God had not made the woman as his helpmeet. Incidentally, the loss of love which followed the transgression is shown by the fact that Adam does not call her Eva, or wife, but only that woman by his side. V. 13. **And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?** It is a call full of reproach: Wherefore hast thou done this? What a terrible thing to do! How couldst thou be so forgetful of the command! **And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.** There is indeed a confession of the fact, but not of the sin, just as in the case of the man. She placed the blame on the serpent as having deceived and seduced her. What was

lacking was the smiting upon the breast and the humble prayer: God, be merciful to me, a sinner! We see here the unspeakable baseness of sin, also in its invention of lies and excuses, in order to place the blame on some one else. A proper realization of its power will enable us to understand all the better the glory of God's mercy in Christ Jesus.

The Curse of God. — V. 14. **And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.** The serpent, which had placed its cunning into the service of the devil, was the first to receive its sentence, and with it Satan, who had hid himself in this form for the purpose of seducing man. The punishment which struck the reptile was only a type of the devil's punishment. The serpent's form and means of locomotion were changed in this curse which singled it out from all animals, both those that were eventually domesticated and those that would remain game and predatory animals of the field. Instead of walking upright, the serpent was hereafter to wind itself along in the dust, which it could, incidentally, not avoid swallowing. V. 15. **And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.** What was a curse for the serpent and for the devil, who had used the serpent for his disguise, was a glorious, comforting promise for fallen mankind, the first great Gospel proclamation: And enmity shall I set between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her Seed. This is not a mere reference to the aversion which most men feel for snakes of every kind, as some liberal commentators have it, but sets forth the cardinal truth of the ages. There would be everlasting and uncompromising enmity between the descendants of the woman, on the one hand, and the devil and all satanic powers, on the other. And this enmity, which would show itself in continual warfare, would finally have its culmination in the event that the one great Seed of the Woman, He to whom the entire Old Testament looks forward, would utterly crush the head of the serpent, of Satan, while the latter, in turn, would not be able to do more than crush the heel of the Victor. To overcome the devil, to annihilate his power, that is a feat beyond the ability of any mere man; only God is able to do this. Christ, the promised Seed of the woman, born of the descendants of Eve, and yet the almighty God, is the strong Champion of mankind, who has delivered all men from the power of Satan and all his mighty allies. True, indeed, in doing so His heel was bruised, He was obliged to die, according to His human nature. But deliverance was effected, salvation was gained by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the representative of all mankind. V. 16. **Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.** This was the woman's burden and punishment for her transgression. Whereas without sin the propagation of the human race would have been a welcome, joyful function and all the other work of life a pleasant burden, the troubles and burdens of woman, especially those connected with pregnancy and birth, are most severe. So woman's nature was weakened as a result of the disturbance of the normal relation between body and soul by sin. Moreover, woman was to be dependent upon man, especially upon her husband; she was to be in submission to him, and he was to exercise authority as ruler in the house. The matter is not one for emancipated women to argue, since the headship of the husband is hereby established until the end of time. V. 17. **And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;** v. 18. **thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.** V. 19. **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.** Adam had been the stronger vessel, even before the Fall. He had had the strength to withstand the temptation; he should have held out even after Eve sinned. But he obeyed the voice of his wife and ate of the forbidden tree. Therefore the field, the soil, which had till now brought forth willingly and in rich abundance, was to be stricken with the curse of God, with the result that man would be able to eat the fruit of the soil only with sorrow, with the continual consciousness of the constant application which is now necessary in bringing it to a state of yielding, of the unceasing battle with thorns, thistles, and noxious weeds. Only in the sweat of his face, through the expenditure of the most assiduous toil, is man now able to eat his bread. For with the Fall the curse of God went into effect; the germ of death was placed into the body of man. His body was now mortal, and destined to return to the earth from which it was originally taken. That is the wages and the curse of sin. This curse, moreover, has extended over the entire material world, the result being a degenerating, a brutalizing of all creation, corruption, death, and destruction. If it were not for the fact that the promise of Christ, the Messiah, stands in the middle between sin and punishment, we should be without comfort in the misery, distress, and tribulation of the earth.

MAN DRIVEN OUT OF PARADISE. — V. 20. **And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living.** Both Adam and his wife received the first Gospel proclamation in silence; they believed the promise and arose from their fall with due repentance. This is shown even in the name which Adam applied to his wife, calling her "life," or "source of life," because she became the mother of the entire human race, whose propagation and life was dependent upon her. V. 21. **Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.** So the first real dress of man was God's work; He authorized them, He gave them instructions, to make themselves coats of skins, which they were to wear as a covering for their nakedness and as a protection against the rigors of a changed climate. Beginning with this time, then, men were permitted to kill and sacrifice animals for their own use. This act of God, incidentally, serves as a basis for all order and decency in the matter of dress under all circumstances. If the dress of man or woman does not cover their nakedness, but suggests or reveals such charms as have an essentially sensual appeal, then it does not serve the purpose for which the Lord intended it in the beginning, then it becomes a tool in the service of sin. V. 22. **And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever,** v. 23. **therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken.** Here the Triune God is again shown in counsel with Himself. Man had become, in a manner of speaking, like one of the persons of the Godhead. He knew good and evil, although, unfortunately, he was involved in the latter himself, having broken through the bounds set him by the Lord. The sentence of punishment had been spoken, and lest man frustrate its force by partaking of the tree of life as well, the Lord now formally expelled Adam and Eve from the lovely garden which had been their home. The man was destined henceforth to gain his livelihood by the most laborious application to the soil from which he himself had been formed. V. 24. **So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.** After his expulsion, man's return into the garden was rendered impossible by the fact that God on the east side, the only accessible entrance, stationed cherubim, armed with the flame of a sword that was two-edged and sharp, glittering in the light as the rays struck its brilliant play. To attempt to pass meant certain death. Man would henceforth know of the existence of Paradise, would even know the location of the tree of life, whose supernatural powers had not been removed by God, but man could not return. This fact was to remind him continually of the time of the final perfection, when sin will be destroyed forever, death will be abolished, and the true tree of life will bear fruit for those that partake of salvation throughout eternity, Rev. 20 and 21.

CHAPTER 4.

The Story of Cain and Abel.

THE OFFERINGS OF CAIN AND ABEL. — V. 1. **And Adam knew Eve, his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.** In the order of natural procreation, according to the blessing which the Lord had pronounced upon the man and his wife, Eve gave birth to a son, whom she named Cain (possession). The reason for giving her first-born son this name is shown in her joyful exclamation: I have gotten a man, Jehovah (which is the exact translation). The first Messianic prophecy had been given, and faith in this prophecy lived in the heart of Eve. Although she therefore made a mistake in the person when she believed this son of hers to be the promised Messiah, she showed that her desire was directed toward the man, toward the Seed of the woman, who was to crush the head of the serpent.2) Adam and Eve were the first sinners, but also the first believers, the beginning of the Church of God on earth. We walk in the footsteps of Eve's faith. V. 2. **And she again bare his brother Abel.** This was her second child, her second son, whose name Abel (vanity) indicates that she was feeling the vanity of this earthly life and hoped all the more eagerly for salvation. **And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.** Thus the two brothers continued in the calling of their father, the younger son devoting himself to the keeping of the smaller domestic animals and the older to the tilling of the soil. V. 3. **And in process of time,** at the end of many days, at the expiration of a long period, **it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.** This shows the manner in which the earliest worship of the Lord took place. Both Cain and Abel, having been instructed by Adam in the knowledge of the Lord, brought offerings, or sacrifices, Cain choosing some of the fruits of the field as his gift. V. 4. **And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.** In the

2) Cp. *Lehre und Wehre*, 60, 337; *Theol. Quart.*, July, 1920.

very mention of the gift there is an indication of the difference in the attitude of the hearts; for whereas it is said of Cain only in general that he brought of the fruit of the soil, it is stated concerning Abel that he brought of the first-born of his flock, such as were in the best of condition, rich in fat. The gifts thus expressed the difference between Abel's free and joyful faith and Cain's legal, reluctant state of heart, Heb. 11, 4; 1 John 3, 12. **And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering;** v. 5a. **but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.** The Lord searches the reins and the heart. He noted the humble faith of Abel, whose one thought was to give the Lord a proof of the sincere gratitude for all the goodness and mercy which had been vouchsafed him. But God saw also the hypocrisy of Cain's heart, the fact that he was not interested in the worship which his hands were performing. He therefore indicated His pleasure in the one case and His displeasure in the other, either by some outward sign visible in the smoke of the offering, or by a subsequent rich blessing in the case of Abel, or through the mouth of Adam, as the priest of the family congregation. It is not the outward size of our gifts and offerings which makes them acceptable in the sight of the Lord, but the attitude of our hearts and minds toward God. He wants pure love flowing out of sound faith.

The First Murder. — V. 5b. **And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.** This paragraph shows the progress of actual sin, from the evil desire of the heart to the sinful act. Cain was jealous of his brother Abel because of the latter's humble faith and his consequent acceptance by God. He was angry exceedingly, he was filled with bitter wrath, which was reflected in his face, in the expression of his eyes, in his distended nostrils. He fell to dark brooding and evil plotting. V. 6. **And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?** The Lord's warning at this time had reference both to the cause and to the possible consequences of Cain's wrath. He implies, first of all, that the brooding posture assumed by Cain, was unreasonable, foolish, in the circumstances. V. 7. **If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.** The fault lay altogether with Cain himself; for if he had done well, if he had had faith and shown this faith in truly good works, in acceptable offerings, then he would have experienced the appreciation for which he seemed anxious, and could have lifted his countenance in token of a good conscience. If, on the other hand, his sacrifice was not brought in true faith and he was now angry over his rejection, then sin, like a wild, predatory beast, would crouch at the door of his heart, eager for even the slightest opportunity to enter and to work its will. **And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.** That is as it should be in the heart of the child of God. Although the desire of sin is always directed against man with the intention of gaining control over him, yet the believer will keep the upper hand, will hold the wrath of the heart back with the firmness of the sanctified mind. V. 8. **And Cain talked with Abel, his brother.** The warning of the Lord was disregarded, deliberately set aside, as he started a quarrel with his brother. **And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him.** Cain did not try to keep the sinful desire of his heart in subjection, and so the end of the quarrel was murder. Note that the words "his brother" are repeated again and again, in order to emphasize the heinousness of the first murder. In our hearts also evil thoughts are found: murders, with all the jealousy, envy, bitterness, hatred, and anger that this climax of wickedness presupposes, and our constant endeavor must be to conquer the inclination toward all these sins and to keep the example of pious Abel before our eyes.

God's Judgment upon Cain. — V. 9. **And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother?** The arraignment of God in this case is like that against Adam and Eve after their transgression. The Lord confronts the murderer with a direct question regarding the whereabouts of his brother Abel, with the intention of working repentance in his heart. **And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?** That is the attitude of the hardened sinner, to deny all responsibility, to challenge the Lord with a bold lie: I don't know; am I supposed to be my brother's special keeper and guardian? Sin, wilfully committed, always hardens the heart, until all hope of repentance, of a godly sorrow, is futile. V. 10. **And He said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.** The great Judge now flatly confronts the murderer with the evidence of his crime: The voice of the blood of thy brother, every single drop of it, is crying to Me from the earth. Blood that is shed in malicious murder may not cry with a voice audible to men, but it cries to God, as the Avenger of all crimes, nevertheless; for murder belongs to the deeds that cry to heaven, a fact which lived in the consciousness of even the heathen nations. V. 11. **And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.** The curse of God rested upon Cain in such a way that it denied him a form of sustenance by way of tilling the ground, the work with which he had till now gained his livelihood. Because the earth had been obliged to open her mouth wide, in the act of swallowing the innocent blood of Abel, therefore the soil now rebelled against the murderer, refusing to serve him as heretofore. V. 12. **When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield**

unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. The irrational creature suffers and groans on account of the sin of man. The earth refuses to yield a crop to the murderer, no matter how hard he should attempt to coax it by the most careful tilling. A feeling of inward quaking, of trembling, of restlessness, would result in Cain's outward fleeing, in a roving without home and without definite relationships. To this day this is the mark of the murderer, for his conscience will give him no rest, but drives him from one city to another, from one country to the next. V. 13. **And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.** Instead of turning to the Lord in true repentance, Cain gives himself up to utter despair, declaring that the guilt of his sin is too great for him to endure, that the punishment meted out to him is too heavy for him to bear. His words imply an accusation against the Judge, who has laid upon him such an unendurable burden. V. 14. **Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me.** In bitter resentment the words pour forth from the mouth of Cain, accusing God of denying him as much as a single spot on the face of the earth where his foot might find rest. Moreover, whereas God had formerly revealed Himself also to him in the worship of the family, Cain now was condemned to be hidden from the face of God, in constant danger of the avenger of blood who might arise from among his brothers and sisters. The complaint of Cain was at the same time a plea for some sort of assurance on the part of God respecting his own safety. V. 15. **And the Lord said unto him, Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.** That was God's answer to Cain's plea, a decree which delivered him to the pains of an evil conscience, after which he may later have welcomed death as a relief. A sevenfold vengeance the Lord threatened to every one who would slay Cain. At the same time the Lord transmitted to Cain some sign, or token, which secured immunity for him against any avenger of blood. Cut off from the companionship of decent human beings, therefore, ostracized so far as the children of God were concerned, Cain became a fugitive and a vagabond, a warning example to all men that would hear of his case that God will not be mocked. Thus the Lord always takes care of His saints, and will avenge their blood upon their enemies. They that trust in Him shall not be ashamed.

THE FAMILY OF CAIN. — V. 16. **And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.** From over against the face of the Lord, from the place where the Lord revealed Himself to His people, Cain, with one of his sisters, who was his wife, journeyed toward the east of the land of Eden, where the garden of the Lord was situated. He cut himself off from all intercourse with the Lord and with His people. V. 17. **And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived and bare Enoch.** Since of one blood all nations of men are made to dwell on the earth, it was necessary, in the early days, for brothers and sisters to marry. Later, the Lord Himself changed this order, the marriage of close relatives at this time being apparently also against a law of nature. Cain called his first son Enoch (dedication), since he believed that his generation would be built up through this son. **And he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.** Literally the text has it that Cain was building a city, that is, a fortified enclosure, as a stronghold for his entire family; it was the work of a lifetime, and gave him some sense of security, affording him a shelter whenever his restlessness permitted him to return home. V. 18. **And unto Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begat Mehujael; and Mehujael begat Methusael; and Methusael begat Lamech.** In each case, of course, only the first-born or the most prominent son is named, the number of offspring being very large, as the entire Bible account indicates.

There is a brief account of the family of Cain: V. 19. **And Lamech took unto him two wives; the name of the one was Adah and the name of the other Zillah.** It was a descendant of Cain that first changed the order of God with regard to monogamy. He married two wives, thus instituting polygamy, by which the purity of marriage was perverted either into wife-slavery or into the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. V. 20. **And Adah bare Jabal; he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.** Here was the beginning of the nomadic life, with the raising and grazing of cattle and no fixed dwelling-places. V. 21. **And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.** This was the second son of Lamech and Adah whose name has been preserved, the inventor of the zither, a kind of stringed instrument, and the horn, or wind instrument. This, then, was the beginning of musical art. V. 22. **And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron; and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.** Tubalcain was the inventor of various sharp tools for cutting metals, especially brass and iron. That was the beginning of crafts in the world. The entire narrative indicates that the minds of the Cainites were directed solely to this world and its enjoyment. Even the names which they gave to their women

shows this, for Adah means "the ornamented one," Zillah "the sweet-sounding one," and Naamah "the lovely one." The powers given to man for the ruling of nature were thus abused for the gratification of various personal desires and lusts. V. 23. **And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding and a young man to my hurt.** V. 24. **If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly, Lamech seventy and sevenfold.** Here is the first instance of the art of poetry, but even this is placed into the service of sin; for this is the form of the poem: —

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, listen to my speech;
For a man have I killed for my wound and
a young man for my welt;
For sevenfold will Cain be avenged, and Lamech
seven and seventyfold.

Thus Lamech boastfully sang in praise of his son's invention which had enabled him to take quick vengeance on some man with whom he had had a quarrel and who managed to wound him. Far from feeling any remorse over his deed, he glorifies the name of his forefather Cain, whom the Lord had given the assurance that He would avenge him in case any one should dare to harm him, and claims for himself a much greater glory for his murder. That reveals the depravity of the children of the world as it had fully developed in the age of Lamech. And thus to-day also the culture of the world does not hinder sin, but offers new opportunities to it. Arts and crafts, commerce, industry, they all are in the service of mammon, they all are used to harm one's neighbor.

Seth and Enos. — V. 25. **And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth; for God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.** The names of other children of Adam and Eve are not mentioned, only that of Seth, who took the place of the first-born, and whose name Eve herself explained: "For the Lord has set to me another descendant in the place of Abel, because Cain slew him." What human wickedness had taken from her in the deed of Cain the divine goodness replaced in the person of Seth. V. 26. **And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.** The family of Seth was the family of believers, and it was during the lifetime of his son Enos that men began formally to proclaim the name of Jehovah, to institute public services for the purpose of worshiping Him in prayer, praise, and the giving of thanks. So the name of the Man, Jehovah, in whom Eve had trusted, was now preached openly; the coming of the Messiah was openly declared. Thus to-day, in the midst of a world steeped in sin, the glorious Gospel of the Savior is proclaimed, and we have comfort in the assurance of our salvation through His power.

CHAPTER 5.

Genealogical Table from Adam to Noah.

From Adam to Seth. — V. 1. **This is the book of the generations of Adam.** This chapter presents a short summary of the history of the believing Adamites in the form of a genealogical table, with a few explanatory notes. **In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him;** v. 2. **male and female created He them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created.** The author here goes back to the history of the creation, chap. 1, 27. 28. God created man male and female, and gave him the blessed knowledge of Himself, as well as perfect righteousness and holiness, besides other external advantages which are often included in this image. And even at that time God called man by that name; Adam bore the name "man" and Eve that of "woman," or "maness." V. 3. **And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.** Since Adam had lost the perfect image of God in the Fall, it was no longer possible for him to transmit the image of God to his offspring. Seth was born in the image of Adam, and therefore subject to sin and death. Since the Fall all men are conceived and born in sin, and all of them are subject to death and damnation, Rom. 5, 12. Only through the merits of the one Man, who was in Himself sinless, though burdened with the guilt of all men, are we delivered from the inevitable doom of damnation. V. 4. **And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years; and he begat sons and daughters;** v. 5. **and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.** That the patriarchs before the Flood lived to such a ripe old age was probably due to the fact that their bodies were not yet so filled with the many tendencies toward sickness which are now so prevalent; they were physically in much better condition than the people of the present time. Then also, as Luther remarks, God had special thoughts of kindness toward the world in having so many pious, wise, and holy men in the world at one time. V. 6. **And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos.** V. 7. **And Seth lived, after he begat Enos, eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and**

daughters. V. 8. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. In spite of the remarkably great age which these men reached, the ever-recurring refrain "and he died" reminds us of the fact that death had now entered the world, and that it is man's inevitable lot to become a prey of the king of terrors so far as the body is concerned, Rom. 5, 14.

FROM ENOS TO JARED. — **V. 9. And Enos lived ninety years and begat Cainan. V. 10. And Enos lived after he begat Cainan, eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 11. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years; and he died.** Although there is some distant resemblance between some of the names in this list and those of the Cainites, the meaning which is attached to this fact by enemies of Scriptures as though the two accounts had originally been the same is absolutely without foundation. The children of God and the children of the world at that time were strictly separate. **V. 12. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel. V. 13. And Cainan lived, after he begat Mahalaleel, eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 14. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died. V. 15. And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared. V. 16. And Mahalaleel lived, after he begat Jared, eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 17. And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years; and he died. V. 18. And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch. V. 19. And Jared lived, after he begat Enoch, eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 20. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years; and he died.** The ever-recurring circle of birth and death is here brought out with great impressiveness, bidding us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

FROM ENOCH TO SHEM, HAM, AND JAPHETH. **V. 21. And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah. V. 22. And Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 23. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years. V. 24. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.** Here we have the short account of Enoch and the praise in which the New Testament joins, Heb. 11, 5. 6. He walked with God: he was in the most intimate intercourse, in the most confidential relation with God. He clung to the invisible God and walked before Him at all times as though He were present and saw every act, heard every word. To such a degree of perfection did he attain in the course of the three centuries after the birth of Methuselah that God chose to take him from this world with its manifold misery. Without seeing death, he was translated into heaven, according to both body and soul. Although a ripe old age, also in our days, may be considered a gift of God, and is to be accepted with all thanksgiving, yet it is also a great kindness on the part of God if He takes some of His children home in the bloom of their youth or in the fulness of their strength and usefulness. He always knows the best time. **V. 25. And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech. V. 26. And Methuselah lived, after he begat Lamech, seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 27. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years; and he died.** Methuselah thus enjoys the distinction of having reached the greatest age recorded for any human being. **V. 28. And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son. V. 29. And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.** It is seen here that even the patriarchs felt the misery of this earthly life in all its burdensomeness. But incidentally Lamech, in explaining the name Noah which he gave to his son, showed that the Messianic hope was alive in him and in his family. Like Eve, he thought that this son of his was the promised Savior, he that would bring rest. Thus the faith and the hope of the fathers before the Flood were directed toward Christ, and herein they agree with the believers of all times. **V. 30. And Lamech lived, after he begat Noah, five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters. V. 31. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years; and he died. V. 32. And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.** With Noah the genealogical table closes; he was the last patriarch before the Flood. His three sons are mentioned because each of them became the ancestor of a separate branch of the human family after the Flood.

The following list will aid in giving a correct idea of the time of the patriarchs before the Flood.

Adam	created	1,	died.....	930
Seth	born	130,	died.....	1042
Enos	born	235,	died.....	1140
Cainan	born	325,	died.....	1235
Mahalaleel	born	395,	died.....	1290
Jared	born	460,	died.....	1422
Enoch	born	622,	taken away	987
Methuselah	born	687,	died.....	1656
Lamech ...	born	874,	died.....	1651
Noah	born	1056,	died.....	2006

CHAPTER 6.

The Events Preceding the Flood.

The Wickedness of Men. — V. 1. **And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,** v. 2. **that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.** The Cainites had long since forsaken the Lord and His worship and lived according to the lusts of their mind. But in the course of time this corruption spread also to the families of the pious, to the sons of God, to the believers, showing itself first of all in a laxity of morals. In fifteen centuries a most remarkable increase of the human family took place, and it became increasingly difficult to maintain the discipline which the Lord desired. The men belonging to the tribe of Seth permitted carnal considerations to influence them in the choice of their wives. The daughters of men, those that lived only for this world and made the enjoyment of all that this world offers their end and goal, very naturally made the development of mere physical beauty their aim. This beauty proved the snare which captivated the sons of God, the men from the generation of believers. They took wives to themselves of all that they chose, no longer as pious helpmates in a marriage in chastity and honor, but for the mere gratification of their sensual desires. Thus the corruption of the Cainites was brought into the Church of God before the Flood. V. 3. **And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.** The Spirit of the Lord had been present in the midst of men, in the Word which was preached to them. But this could not remain thus very much longer on account of the wilful defection of men, on account of their deliberate erring. They refused to heed His warnings and reprimands, for they had turned to their carnal desires. So God concluded to give them a final one hundred and twenty years as respite. Noah, as the preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. 2, 5, was to lift up his voice once more, and if men would not listen to his words, the punishment should come upon them. V. 4. **There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.** The conditions before the Flood are further characterized. Wild, lawless men, tyrants there were on the earth in those days, offspring of marriages that did not meet with God's approval, children of wild passion, men that defied order and authority and became mighty men, whose names were mentioned with bated breath as those of unparalleled champions and heroes. The whole earth was full of outrage and violence. Cp. Matt. 24, 38. 39. This is a picture of our own days, of the period immediately preceding the final Judgment, full of the most impressive warning for all that will heed the signs of the times.

God Resolves to Destroy Man. — V. 5. **And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** Noah's preaching had little or no effect. Jehovah saw that in spite of all His efforts to win the hearts of men the wickedness of man in general was increasing. No dam was able to hold back the flood of evil: the entire human race persisted in its mad course toward destruction. Every thought that took form in the heart of every man was wicked all the day long; every one of them was an adept in every form of vice, and all the planning of their hearts was ever directed to that which challenged the righteousness of God. V. 6. **And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.** The utter disgust of Jehovah over the conditions on earth is here expressed in the terms in use among men. So great was the universal wickedness that Jehovah repented of His having made man, who, by the impenitence and the hardness of his heart, was challenging Him to wreak His wrath upon the offenders. But, on the other hand, so great is the mercy of the Lord that the situation caused Him to feel deep grief and concern in His heart; He felt the pain of divine love because of the sin of men. But justice must reign and be carried out. V. 7. **And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them.** The sentence of the Lord is comprehensive, referring to the entire sphere in which man is the head and chief. Man, whom He had created, He wanted to destroy utterly from the face of the earth. And the irrational beast that was created for man's service is also included in his destruction: mammals and reptiles and birds together. Thus the immutable God did not change, neither in His essence nor in His counsels; but He was obliged to apply His punitive justice on account of the change in man which challenged His wisdom, holiness, and righteousness.

God Chooses Noah. — V. 8. **But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.** "In these words there breaks forth from the dark cloud of wrath the mercy which gives security for the preservation and restoration of humanity." (*Keil.*) God did not plan an absolute destruction of the entire human race, but only of those that deliberately persisted in their wickedness and would not accept the warning of His Spirit. V. 9. **These are the generations,** the gene-

alogy, **of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God.** That is a summary of Noah's history: he was a righteous man, upright and just before the eyes of the generations that passed before his eyes. Like Enoch, chap. 5, 22, he was in the most intimate relation with God, on terms of such confidence as to make his performing of the will of God self-evident. As Noah was the last of the patriarchs before the Flood, so he was the first of the line whose descendants after the Flood were the children of Israel, the chosen people of God. V. 10. **And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.** Cp. chap. 5, 32. V. 11. **The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.** V. 12. **And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.** These statements complete the picture drawn in verses 1—4. Utterly corrupt was the earth before the face of God, like a rotten piece of meat whose very appearance is nauseating. It would have been impossible to hide the conditions from the Lord; He was compelled to intervene with His curse and punishment, because the earth was full of violence and open wickedness. The Lord was a witness of the growing, unspeakable corruption which finally included the entire human race, carnal-mindedness being the governing impulse of every man's life. All that men had before them and wanted to keep before them was the gratification of their own fleshly desires. Their wickedness was openly perpetrated, and their moral judgment, their conscience, was submerged in their approbation of everything that was evil and corrupt. V. 13. **And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.** As the end of the time of respite approached, God saw that it was useless to extend this period. Its termination meant the end of the world which had reached the limit in wickedness and corruption and was bound for everlasting destruction. The Lord therefore announced that He would destroy men with the earth in the form which it then had, just as one of the consequences of the Flood has been that the earth and the fruits it produces no longer have the strength of the uncorrupted soil, neither does the life of men reach the length which was common with the patriarchs before the Flood. Thus the sentence of the Lord was passed, a word of warning also for our day and age. 1 Cor. 10, 11.

THE COMMAND TO BUILD AND EQUIP THE ARK. V. 14. **Make thee an ark of gopher-wood.** Noah and his family alone were exempted from the general destruction. For his preservation he was to build an ark, or ship of refuge, not so much for purposes of navigation, but for the carrying of a very great load. Of gopher-wood the ark was to be built, which seems to have been a cypress-wood, very strong and able to withstand the influence of moisture very well. **Rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.** These compartments were not large rooms, but small cells, little cabins, intended for the housing of men and beasts. To make the vessel absolutely water-tight, all the seams, both inside and outside, were calked with pitch. V. 15. **And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.** Figuring a cubit at a foot and a half, the dimensions of the ark were 450 feet in length, 75 feet in width, and 45 feet in height. The cubic contents of the vessel thus exceeded 1,800,000 cubic feet, and afforded ample room for the purpose which the ark was to serve, being able, as has been demonstrated, to carry a cargo greater by one-third than any other form of like cubical content. V. 16. **A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above.** The Hebrew text here indicates that an arrangement was made by which light and air could enter the ark, a light-opening, either under the ridge of the roof on one side, extending the entire length of the vessel a cubit in height, or in the upper deck, thus affording the opportunity for various light-openings in the interior. **And the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof.** This was the entrance which the Lord afterwards closed, opening it again only at the end of the Flood. **With lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.** There were no individual openings for all these, but they were connected on the inside, probably by stairways, thus affording access to all the cells.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FLOOD. — V. 17. **And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die.** The announcement is very definite: I am bringing the deluge of waters upon (or over) the earth. That is the punishment which the Lord had had in mind all the while, and this is about to be realized in that universal flood. The result would be the destruction of all flesh in which is the breath of life, of all beings that breathe with lungs: all such beings would have to yield up their spirit. V. 18. **But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy sons' wives with thee.** Through Noah and his sons the Lord intended to propagate the human race after the Flood, with a new beginning, on the basis of the covenant which He was now making with him. V. 19. **And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark to keep**

them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. V. 20. **Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive.** This was God's provision against the total extermination of the animals with the breath of life. A pair of every kind, at the instigation of God, came to the ark and was admitted by Noah. This was true of the larger mammals as well as of the birds and reptiles: they all were to be kept alive in the midst of the general destruction. V. 21. **And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee and for them.** The providence of God overlooked nothing that was necessary to keep Noah with his entire cargo of animals alive; an abundant supply of food was laid in. V. 22. **Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.** This was an evidence of Noah's faith, Heb. 11, 7. For as yet there was nothing to be seen of the Flood, and he was undoubtedly subjected to every form of ridicule. The essence of faith is trust in the Word of God in spite of all the attempts of the enemies to heap scorn upon His promises.

CHAPTER 7.

The Story of the Flood.

The Order to Embark. — V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation.** Here is the solemn command of Jehovah with which He announced the coming of the cataclysm; it was the signal of the approaching judgment. Of all the millions of men then living only Noah had been found righteous in the eyes of God. V. 2. **Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.** Here the account is more specific, distinguishing between clean and unclean animals. Cp. Lev. 11; Deut. 14. Of clean animals a total of seven of each kind were to be taken into the ark, probably three pairs and a fourth male intended for a sacrificial animal; but with regard to the unclean animals the arrangement by pairs was observed. V. 3. **Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.** So these animals and birds were to be the progenitors of the animal world after the Flood, to restock the earth, which would be rendered desolate by the universal destruction. V. 4. **For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.** First it had been years of respite, but now the time has narrowed down to a few days, thus emphasizing once more the inevitable doom. The destruction was to be brought upon the earth by a flood inaugurated by a steady rain of forty days and forty nights, and it was to include all animate creation, everything that had its own separate existence, all of which was to be blotted out from the face of the earth. V. 5. **And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him.** Cp. chap. 6, 22. V. 6. **And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.** The hundred and twenty years of grace had begun even before his marriage, or at least before the birth of his sons, chap. 5, 32, and the latter were now almost one hundred years old. Thus the entire congregation of believers had dwindled down to eight souls, Methuselah having died in the year of the Flood.

The Embarkation. — V. 7. **And Noah went in, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the Flood.** The members of Noah's household were thus one with him in faith and in obedience, for which reason they all, unlike Lot's wife, were saved in the catastrophe from the waters of the Deluge, which destroyed all other men. V. 8. **Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth,** v. 9. **there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.** It was not a mere presentiment of coming danger that prompted the animals to gather about Noah, the clean and the unclean mammals, birds, and reptiles, neither was it a matter of instinct only, but it happened thus by God's arrangement, and it was He that commanded the animals to assemble at the place where the ark stood ready for occupancy. By pairs they entered into the ark under the direction of Noah, who thus fulfilled the command of God. V. 10. **And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the Flood were upon the earth.** Exactly according to the prediction of God, on the seventh day after His final command to Noah, the Flood came upon the earth. God's promises, whether they concern a blessing or a punishment, can never fail of fulfilment. It is a part of true wisdom in the believers to rely implicitly in His Word.

The Flood Begins. — V. 11. **In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the**

great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. V. 12. **And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.** The exact fixing of the day on which the terrible punishment of God had its beginning serves to emphasize its importance for all time. It was not a small local disturbance which is here recorded, but a universal deluge, a flood which covered the entire earth. It was a miracle of God's avenging and punitive justice. For all the fountains of the great deep were split open and broke forth: the waters beneath the earth which are otherwise locked and hidden in its depths rushed forth with impetuous force. And the windows of heaven were opened. the waters which are ordinarily held back by the firmament set above by the Lord, chap. 1, 6. 7, were now released to pour their masses upon the earth. At the same time a rain set in which streamed down without intermission for forty days and forty nights. V. 13. **In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;** v. 14. **they and every beast after his kind and all the cattle after their kind and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.** V. 15. **And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.** V. 16. **And they that went in went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him. And the Lord shut him in.** Time and again the emphasis is placed upon the exact manner in which the command of God was carried out. All the mammals of every kind, according to genera and species, had assembled, likewise the birds and the reptiles, in the interval of seven days after the Lord's first announcement. The family of Noah had likewise been obedient to the command of God, to the last letter. The embarkation had thus been completed just as God had outlined it before the Flood began. And the Lord Himself locked the door after Noah. All the clamoring of men for admission after the beginning of the predicted catastrophe would be vain, their repentance would come too late. Let no man be deceived; the same God that brought the Deluge upon a fallen race is living to-day, and He is not mocked. To continue in trespass in the face of the plain words of the Lord is a dangerous proceeding, to say the least. We know that a punishment, even greater and more terrible than the Deluge, is coming at the end of the world. The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men, 2 Pet. 3, 7. Then will the fire of divine wrath burn through all eternity.

THE DESTRUCTION CAUSED BY THE FLOOD. — V. 17. **And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.** It took forty days for the Flood to reach its crest, to come to full development. During this time the ark was lifted up from the dry land where it had been built; high above the earth the vessel of deliverance rode majestically forward. V. 18. **And the waters prevailed and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.** Greater, farther, and wider the expanse of the waters grew, a limitless ocean where formerly only the dry land had been seen. V. 19. **And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered.** The very repetition of similar expressions serves to impress upon the reader the immensity of that waste of waters which stretched out over the whole earth. Finally even the summits of the highest mountains sank beneath the flood of waters, and men and animals that may have sought safety in the mountains perished like the rest. V. 20. **Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.** To think of a partial flood, of a local deluge, with this plain account before us were madness; for if the Deluge, after reaching its crest, stood on the earth for more than one hundred days and the ark did not settle on Mount Ararat until the waters subsided, then it stands to reason that it must have been a great deal higher than 16,000 feet, the height of Mount Ararat, and the fact that water seeks its own level would alone demand our belief in the universality of the Flood. Besides, the expression is very general: The mountains were covered; wherever they were on the entire surface of the earth, they were hidden by this mass of waters sent as a punishment by God. V. 21. **And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle and of beast and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man;** v. 22. **all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.** All animate beings on earth which breathe with lungs and have the ability to move about on the dry land: reptiles, birds, mammals, men, they all had to perish in the great Flood. V. 23. **And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle and the creeping things and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth.** As Jehovah had announced, v. 4, so He carried His threat into execution: every being that has an independent existence and maintains its life by breathing with lungs was destroyed. **And Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.** V. 24. **And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.** In the midst of that fearful waste of waters, in which

all living, animate beings of the earth found their grave, and which covered the earth for a full hundred and fifty days after reaching its highest level, only Noah and his family were saved, the water in their case serving as the means of lifting up their vessel and thus preserving their lives. The water of the Deluge, according to Scriptures, is a type of Baptism, 1 Pet. 3, 20. 21. The water of Baptism delivers us and saves us; it washes away the filth of our sins and presents us to God as His children through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Thus there is comfort for us even in this story of death and destruction.

CHAPTER 8.

The End of the Flood.

The Flood Subsides. — V. 1. **And God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged.** During those long days when the lowlands and finally even the uplands and the mountains sank from sight in the terrible and limitless waste of waters, Noah's faith may often have been tried sorely as to whether he and his family would survive the general destruction. But God did not forget His servant, and in due time He gave him proof to this effect. He caused a wind to pass over the earth in order to take up the moisture of the universal ocean, and the waters no longer rose, but settled, began to subside. V. 2. **The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.** God shut up the wells of the great deep and closed the windows of the firmament, so that these sources no longer yielded the limitless masses of water. At the same time the rain was hindered from falling, as it may have done intermittently even after the first forty days of deluge. V. 3. **And the waters returned from off the earth continually; and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.** The waters literally went back from off the earth going and returning, with a steady appreciable settling, becoming definitely less at the end of one hundred and fifty days, this number including both the beginning and the end of the Flood. V. 4. **And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.** The Lord so arranged matters that the ark settled down, came to a rest, on the mountain range of Ararat, in the highlands of Armenia. This was just five months, or one hundred and fifty days, after the Deluge had commenced. In this mountain range the Great Ararat rises to a height of 16,254 feet, while the Lesser Ararat is about 12,000 feet high. This landing-place of the ark is of the highest significance for the development of humanity, for Armenia lies in the middle of the old continent and approximately at an equal distance from the extremities of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Just as the first cradle of the human race had been somewhere in this neighborhood, thus this country was once more chosen by God as the starting-point for the new human family. V. 5. **And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.** The subsiding of the waters was slow, but steady, until, seventy-three days after the landing of the ark, the summits of the Armenian highlands were visible from Ararat. This was about 223 days after the beginning of the Flood.

The Sending of the Raven and the Dove. V. 6. **And it came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;** v. 7. **and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth.** Forty days after the summits of the highlands had become visible, Noah opened the window of the ark, that is, he took away the screen from the light-opening and let a raven fly out, his intention being to find out whether it were possible for birds to find the necessary food on the earth by this time. But this experiment was not satisfactory, since the raven went forth and returned, probably feeding on the carrion which he found and then returning for his mate, without, however, becoming an inmate of the ark again. V. 8. **Also he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;** v. 9. **but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.** For his second attempt at finding out how much the waters had decreased on the earth Noah chose a bird of more domestic habits, a dove. For the dove the bleak cliffs were no acceptable roosting-places; so she returned to the shelter of the ark. Noah concluded from this that the waters were still covering the entire lowlands, so he put forth his hand for the dove to alight upon, thus causing her to return into the ark. V. 10. **And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;** v. 11. **and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf, plucked off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.**

Noah continued to give evidence of the patience of faith by once more waiting a full week before he sent out another dove. This dove made a wide flight in search of the plains and did not return until the evening. But the token which she brought was a fair sign of deliverance soon to be expected, for in her bill she carried a leaf, or small twig, of an olive-tree, a species which is found only in the lowlands, has green leaves throughout the year, and is able to endure the action of water for a long time. Thus Noah had proof that the waters had fallen to the level of the olive-trees in the valleys. V. 12. **And he stayed yet other seven days and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more.** The dove, finding both roosting-places and food in abundance, no longer felt the need of returning to the shelter of the ark. The attraction of freedom, under the circumstances, and the new life outweighed the desire to return. The great Flood was a thing of the past.

NOAH LEAVES THE ARK. — V. 13. **And it came to pass in the six-hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.** V. 14. **And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.** Almost three hundred days had now elapsed since Noah and his family had entered the ark, and still he exercised patience, waiting for the earth to regain its solidity and the vegetation to come forth. But several weeks later, the waters of the Flood proper having dried up, Noah took off the roof, or covering, of the ark. It was now plain that the waters were no longer flowing back, and that the ground was in process of becoming dry. And still he waited fifty-seven days until the surface of the ground was fully dry and fit for human and animal habitation, the plants having meanwhile had an opportunity to mature for food. V. 15. **And God spake unto Noah, saying,** v. 16. **Go forth of the ark, thou and thy wife and thy sons and thy sons' wives with thee.** Noah did not leave the ark by his own arbitrary will, but waited patiently until the Lord expressly gave the command, solemnly naming the individuals that were thus delivered after more than a year spent in the ark. V. 17. **Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl and of cattle and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.** The animals that had been in the ark with Noah, all the birds and the mammals and the reptiles, were to be the nucleus for, the parent-stock of, a new world of animals. For that reason the Lord even intensified the blessing which He had spoken upon them after their creation, chap. 1, 22 ff. The new generation was to be propagated mightily and grow into very many as soon as possible, for the whole earth was now without living inhabitants with the exception of those saved in the ark. V. 18. **And Noah went forth and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him;** v. 19. **every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.** Noah and his family were obedient, as usual. And as for the animals, down to the smallest reptile that had found shelter in the ark, they were undoubtedly glad to return to the life of freedom which they had enjoyed before the Flood. Thus the Lord, for the sake of Noah, did not fully destroy the earth, but intends to preserve it until He has carried out His work in His Church on earth. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the Deluge is a type and precursor of the last Judgment. When the patience and long-suffering of the Lord will finally have been exhausted, then the day of His wrath will strike the world like a thief in the night.

THE PROMISE OF GOD. — V. 20. **And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.** Noah's first act after leaving the ark of deliverance was an act of worship. He built an altar, a place of slaying the sacrificial victim, and brought a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. That is a proof of true faith, of true piety, if men wait for the help of the Lord in all patience, even when deliverance seems long in coming, and finally give all praise and thanks to God for the revelation of His goodness in sending help. V. 21. **And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done.** When Noah made his offering, the Lord smelled the smell of pleasure, of satisfaction, that is, He accepted the prayers and the disposition of mind which was revealed in this sacrifice in mercy. Therefore He said to Himself, to His heart, He thought within Himself, a conclusion which He afterward revealed to Noah, that He would never again bring such a judgment of total destruction upon the earth within the period which He had fixed for its existence; for the earth will not stand forever, will not last throughout eternity. A day is coming when the almighty Lord will bring upon the world His wrath and the fire of His jealousy to consume the corrupt world. Meanwhile it is His mercy and long-suffering that causes Him to abstain from smiting every living thing. For that which the human heart

and mind shapes within itself, what it imagines, what it thinks, what it plans, is evil from the earliest days of youth. Since the Fall all men are naturally depraved and corrupted, inclined only to that which is evil. There is only one way of effecting deliverance from this inherited disposition toward everything that is evil, namely, through the obedience and merit of Jesus Christ the Savior. As for the earth: V. 22. **While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.** That is the promise, that is the order of God, who fixes the laws of nature and, according to circumstances, changes or suspends them as He finds best. The human race, but not the great Creator, is dependent upon the order and upon the laws of nature. The consideration of the goodness and of the patience of God, therefore, should be an earnest incentive to us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

CHAPTER 9.

The Covenant of God with Noah. Noah's Sin.

God Blesses Noah and His Sons. — V. 1. **And God blessed Noah and his sons and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.** This is a repetition and a confirmation of the blessing of creation, chap. 1, 28. As founders of the new human race, Noah and his sons received the assurance of God's blessing for the propagation of their kind. Note that the blessing of the Lord is incidentally a command; it is His will that the human race should be propagated, that man and woman, in holy wedlock, should be fruitful and multiply. The modern criminal limiting of offspring is a blasphemous perversion of God's order of creation. V. 2. **And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.** This is an extension and a confirmation of the order of God by which man was given dominion over the animals. Before the Fall all creatures willingly placed themselves under the direction of man, as the lord of creation. But now the fear of man and the dread of man was to keep the animals and the birds and the fishes in check, because sin with its consequences has dissolved the bonds of willing subjection, man having lost his natural power over nature, and nature, in turn, being constantly on the verge of rebellion against man. God gave them under the hand of man, but man is constantly obliged to resort to force to maintain his superiority. V. 3. **Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.** In the early days of the human race God had restricted man to a vegetarian diet, chap. 1, 29, but now everything that lived and moved, all animals, were included in the food which was at man's disposal. Thus was the eating of flesh formally legalized and, at the same time, commended. V. 4. **But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.** Although the eating of flesh was permitted, yet a restriction is added to the concession, namely, that excluding flesh as food while the living blood was still coursing through the veins, whether this referred to pieces cut out of the living animal or to the eating of blood. This provision was added to prevent man's degeneration to coarse and brutal barbarism, or even savagery. V. 5. **And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.** V. 6. **Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man.** While the blood and the life of animals is in the power of man, he is strictly forbidden to shed that of his fellow-man. The blood of every person with reference to his soul (since the life is in the blood) the Lord will require at the hands of man and of every beast. Thus the life of man is here safeguarded against beasts as well as against fellow-men. The killing of every human being will be punished by the Lord, but not directly or immediately, as He had promised in the case of Cain. He that sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. The punishment of murder is laid into the hands of the government, which shall punish the murderer by requiring his life in exchange for that which he took. This is, as Luther remarks, the first command regarding the authority of the government in the wielding of the sword. In these words the temporal government is authorized, and the authority from God to use the sword is conferred. For in the image of God made He man: murder is a violation of the image of God in man, which the Lord intends to restore in all those that are renewed in faith, and which He wants all men to put on. In a wider sense, therefore, man bears even now the image of God, since he is a rational creature and has an immortal soul. V. 7. **And you, be ye fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.** Cp. v. 1; chap. 1, 28. The emphatic repetition is not without significance, especially in view of the situation as it now exists.

The Rainbow a Token of the Covenant. —

V. 8. **And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,** v. 9. **And I, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you,** v. 10. **and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.** The Lord here addresses both Noah and his sons, although the latter occupied a subordinate position. He established, set up, confirmed, a covenant, by giving the promise of the covenant, of the realization of future happiness. Not only with Noah, his sons, and their descendants did God establish this league, but also with the irrational beasts, especially those that had found refuge in the ark, with all animate beings over whom He had given them dominion, whether birds, or mammals, or any other beings on the earth. V. 11. **And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.** This is the resolution which God had determined upon within Himself, chap. 8, 21, which He now made known to man as His covenant: there should be no new destruction to cut off all flesh in a sudden catastrophe; the end of the earth should not be brought about through a deluge, to cause the universe to perish. V. 12. **And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:** v. 13. **I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth.** In confirmation of His words God gave to man a special token, or sign, for everlasting generations, to last as long as the earth stands. This token was to be a reminder of the covenant which the Lord now established between Himself and all living beings. It is the rainbow, God's bow, which is the sign of His covenant. He did set it in the rain-clouds, thus establishing that law of nature which causes the refraction of the light-rays when they pass through drops of water. V. 14. **And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud;** v. 15. **and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.** V. 16. **And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.** In speech which is modeled strongly after that of men, and by a repetition of thought which emphasizes the bow and the covenant of God and the relation between the two again and again, the Lord impresses the significance of His act upon Noah and his sons. Whenever dark clouds do arise for a rainstorm on the earth, and whenever this beautiful phenomenon of the rainbow appears, then God has given His promise to remember His eternal covenant not to destroy all living flesh with another flood. V. 17. **And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth.** Whenever we see the rainbow in the clouds, we should remember the covenant of God toward all flesh, the fact that He is at peace with His creatures, so far as their outward existence is concerned. The token of God's covenant with which He has connected His promises really guarantees His goodness and grace, possessing power and significance not only for men, but also before God. Every appearance of the rainbow should cause a prayer of thanksgiving to arise to our lips, praising the goodness and mercy of God. It may be remarked in this connection that the changing of the laws of nature indicates that the atmosphere and the climate of the earth before the Flood must have differed materially from that which now obtains, an assumption which is sustained by biological discoveries during the last centuries.

NOAH'S SIN. — V. 18. **And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan.** V. 19. **These are the three sons of Noah; and of them was the whole earth overspread.** Since Noah had no more sons after the Flood, his three sons may be said to have been the progenitors of the human race since that great catastrophe. Attention is called thus early to Canaan, the son of Ham, since he and his descendants entered into very significant relations with the chosen people of God. The entire population of the world may trace its descent from the three sons of Noah. V. 20. **And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard;** v. 21. **and he drank of the wine and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.** Noah, as a husbandman, as a tiller of the soil, now devoted himself to the cultivation of the vine: he planted a vineyard. But in making use of the product of his labors he forgot the caution which is essential in the life of every Christian. He drank of the wine, of the fermented juice of the grape, which is here mentioned for the first time, and he partook of the liquor to excess. He became intoxicated and lay in his tent in a drunken stupor, uncovered to the gaze of every passer-by. Scripture is not silent concerning the sins of the believers, but relates many of them for the purpose of warning us against the dangers of sin. V. 22. **And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.** This act on the part of Ham, enjoying the shame of his father in making it a matter of scornful joking over against his brothers, showed both a lack of the proper respect toward

his father and a proneness toward indecency, in short, a bold and impious disposition of mind. He had evidently forgotten the earnest piety which he had learned from his father. V. 23. **And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.** Even though Noah had sinned, it was not the business of the sons to make mockery of the fact. Shem and Japheth did what filial reverence demanded of them when they covered the shame of their father without so much as looking at him. Thus they also showed the chasteness of their mind. This behavior may well serve as a lesson for our day and age, when sexual matters are always kept in the foreground, either by prurient speech and behavior or by shameless exposure of nakedness.

The Curse upon Canaan. — V. 24. **And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.** As the intoxication wore off, Noah awoke to soberness and found out what Ham had done, probably by reason of the dress which covered him. It was doubtless with deep humiliation that he became fully aware of the rôle which he had played. But to this was added just anger at the disrespect of Ham. V. 25. **And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.** The curse strikes Canaan, because he followed his father in his sinful, wicked disposition. Therefore his offspring, his whole generation, should be cursed by being servants of servants to the brothers of Ham and their descendants. The sons of Canaan in Palestine were either annihilated or became servants of the children of Israel; and his later descendants in Africa were, for many centuries, the slaves of the Japhetic peoples. It has been only through the power of the Gospel that their lot has been changed, and that they have become partakers of the glories of salvation and of the blessings which attend Christianity. V. 26. **And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.** The Lord Jehovah, the true, living God, was to be the God of Shem. From the descendants of Shem the Lord chose the people to whom He entrusted His oracles, the Messianic prophecies. From the descendants of Shem, from the children of Israel, the promised Seed of the woman, Jesus Christ the Savior, was born. V. 27. **God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.** The blessing of God came upon Japheth and his descendants, chiefly the European nations. They have been spread out far and wide; they have had the destinies of the world in their hands, under God. But the highest distinction of these peoples was that they partook of the blessings of Shem, that they became partakers of the one salvation, in Christ. Like a refrain the fact of Canaan's servitude is predicted three times, showing that his curse indeed would be heavy and long-enduring. V. 28. **And Noah lived after the Flood three hundred and fifty years.** V. 29. **And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.** Holy man though he was, and distinguished above all men of his time, he yet, as a sinner, was subject to death: he went the way of all flesh.

CHAPTER 10.

The Genealogical Tree of the Seventy Chief Nations after the Flood.

The Sons of Japheth. — V. 1. **Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and unto them were sons born after the Flood.** V. 2. **The sons of Japheth,** who in this chronological table is named first, as the oldest, while in the other table Shem is mentioned first, as the progenitor of the children of Israel: **Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.** The descendants of these men have been identified respectively, and with some show of probability, as the Cimmerians of Asia Minor, with whom the Cymry of Wales and Brittany and the Cimbri of ancient Germany are related, as the Scythians of Southern Russia, as the Medes south of the Caspian Sea, as the Graeco-Italian family of nations, and as the Iberians, Georgians, and Armenians of Asia Minor. V. 3. **And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah,** whose descendants were probably the Askanians in Northern Phrygia, the Celts, or Gauls, and the major part of the Armenian nation. V. 4. **And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim,** from whom the Aeolians of Greece (Thessaly), the ancient Spanish nations, the Cyprians and the Carians, and the Dardanians, or Trojans, are possibly descended. V. 5. **By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.** From the Japhetites there have descended and then have separated themselves the nations along the Mediterranean Sea, each one according to its own language, according to its generations in its nations.

The Sons of Ham. — V. 6. **And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.** Their descendants are to be found later in Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, and the land of Canaan. V. 7. **And the sons of Cush:**

Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. Their descendants afterward lived in Northeastern Africa, in Arabia, and along the Gulf of Persia. V. 8. **And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth.** V. 9. **He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord.** V. 10. **And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.** One son of Cush is here singled out on account of his extraordinary ability and mighty conquests. This was Nimrod, whose feats of hunting were not only so unusual as to become proverbial among all the nations of his day, but who also established a great kingdom on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, with Babylon as its capital and other mighty cities, the ruins of which have in part been discovered. But his work was undertaken over against God, in opposition to Jehovah, in the haughtiness and pride of his own mind, a fact which also made him a tyrant toward men, as the text implies. V. 11. **Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,** v. 12. **and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; the same is a great city.** Out of the land of Babylon Nimrod, not satisfied with his conquests, marched forth into the land toward the north, which was afterwards known as Asshur, or Assyria. Here he built the great city of Nineveh, which consisted of four quarters, Nineveh proper, the southern section, Rehoboth, the eastern section, Calah, toward the north, and Resen, in the center. So great was this complex of cities that it was afterward described as having a circumference of four hundred and eighty stadia, or about fifty-five miles, which agrees well with the account in the book of Jonah, chap. 3, 3.3) V. 13. **And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,** v. 14. **and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.** These nations were afterwards found in Egypt proper, along the Mediterranean toward the northwest and northeast as far as Philistia, and on the islands of the Mediterranean.

THE SONS OF CANAAN. — V. 15. **And Canaan begat Sidon, his first-born, and Heth,** v. 16. **and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,** v. 17. **and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,** v. 18. **and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.** This explains the origin of the Phenicians on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, of the Hittites, whose various branches were found throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Canaan, some of them occupying the hill land of Judah in the neighborhood of Hebron, of the Jebusites, who lived in the country where Jerusalem was afterward built, of the Amorites on the mountains of Judah and far beyond the Jordan, of the Girgasites, who may have occupied the country southeast of the Sea of Galilee, of the Hivites, who lived from Gibeon to the foot of Hermon, of the Arkites, north of Sidon, of the Sinites and Zemarites, who lived well into what was later Northern Syria and Cilicia, of the Arvadites, farthest north of all these tribes, of the Hamathites, on the river Orontes. All these tribes and nations came into existence as the children of Canaan left the home of their fathers and sought their own places to live. V. 19. **And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.** These are the general boundaries of the Canaanites, who later gave the children of Israel so much trouble: from Sidon in Phenicia to Gaza in Philistia, and including the country toward the west as far as the later location of the Dead Sea. V. 20. **These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.**

THE SONS OF SHEM. — V. 21. **Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born.** Shem is here called the father of all the children of Eber, the Hebrews in the wider sense of the word, because Eber, through his sons Peleg and Joktan, was the progenitor of two distinct series of peoples, the Joktanites of Arabia and the Abrahamites, afterward the children of Israel. V. 22. **The children of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.** The nations, or tribes, which descended from them were afterward found in the Persian country of Elymais, in Assyria, in Chaldea, in Lydia in Asia Minor, and in Syria, respectively. V. 23. **And the children of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.** These names, as found in various accounts, point to the fact that the tribes descending from Aram gradually moved toward the east and northeast. V. 24. **And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.** The two names Salah (sending forth) and Eber (passing over) may indicate that the emigration of tribes in one large movement, as spoken of in the next chapter, took place at this time. V. 25. **And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.** Eber probably took part in the great Babylonian emigration, for he named his older son Peleg (division), with reference, undoubtedly, to the division and confusion brought

3) Cp. Barton, *Archeology and the Bible*, 44—58.

about in consequence of the interference of God. V. 26. **And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,** v. 27. **and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,** v. 28. **and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,** v. 29. **and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.** V. 30. **And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east.** Of the thirteen names in this list several have been preserved in various parts of Arabia, and so the Arabians are the Joktanites, descendants of Shem. V. 31. **These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.** V. 32. **These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the Flood.** This is the Lord's own genealogical table, and it has not yet been superseded. The most careful work on the part of archeologists has rather confirmed the Biblical account in every item. All the nations of men that dwell on the earth have come from one blood, Acts 17, 26.

CHAPTER 11.

The Confusion of Tongues and One Line of Shem's Descendants.

The Building of the Tower. — V. 1. **And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.** Much of the explanatory matter in the preceding chapter, as well as the mention of various languages, belongs to a later period of history, being indicated there merely for the sake of offering a complete picture. The story which is now told belongs to a period only about one hundred years after the Flood, if we may assume that it occurred at the time when Peleg was born. At that time all the people of the world still had but one speech and one language. V. 2. **And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.** From the highlands of the Ararat range the survivors of the Flood and their families moved down, by degrees, in an easterly direction until they reached the great plain where the Euphrates and Tigris rivers flow. It is a rich and fertile plain, or was in those days, and the people were constrained to give up their nomadic form of living and establish permanent sites for homes. V. 3. **And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.** Not only Ham and Canaan had meanwhile forsaken the religion of Noah, but other members of his family had likewise turned from the living God to the vanity and pride of their own imagination. This is indicated by the manner of their speech in proposing to build a city and a tower. V. 4. **And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.** Their plans were made with care. Instead of the usual sun-dried brick they proposed to use burnt brick, which would be able to withstand the ravages of the weather so much the better. And instead of merely laying the bricks loosely, they planned to set them firmly by the use of asphalt, which is found in large quantities near the ruins of Babylon. Just what motive prompted them to undertake the building of such a city and tower whose top should reach to the sky is shown in their words: And let us make for us a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth. An arrogant, blasphemous pride was here combined with a cringing fear of the avenging justice of the Lord. They were full of enmity toward God; their purpose was to defy His almighty power and to make this city with its tower the center of the world, to which they might return even if it should happen that the Lord would scatter them into the four winds.

The Beginning of the Various Languages. V. 5. **And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded.** God could not let this challenge to His almighty government of the world go unanswered. He made arrangements to interfere. For though it was a mighty city which the children of men were building, a city whose dimensions astonish the explorer even to-day, the foundations of whose tower and of the many other architectural adornments are a source of constant surprise, it was but as a grain of dust in the hands of the almighty God. V. 6. **And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.** V. 7. **Go to, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.** The Lord first sets forth the situation as He found it: Behold, one people they are, one connection, one association, one community, and one speech they all have. These two factors made the people strong in the pursuit of a common interest. What they had begun to do they would work for with all possible energy; and nothing would be restrained, held back, from them. The result would be the eventual destruction of true freedom, of personal life, and of the plans which God had concerning the Messiah. So God confounded their language, confused their speech, the miracle

consisting in an inward process by which the old association of ideas connected with words was taken away, and new and utterly different modes of expression were immediately implanted. The confusion was so complete that the people could no longer understand one another, and all working together was excluded. V. 8. **So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city.** That was the consequence of the miracle. A great migration of families and tribes over the whole earth began, by which men were scattered to the four winds. The great project as planned naturally had to be abandoned. Even if some few people, whom we may now term Babylonians, remained in the city, to be conquered afterward by Nimrod, the purpose of the human race in its blasphemous pride was not realized. V. 9. **Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.** Babel means confusion, and the result of the confusion of tongues is before our eyes to this day. The human race is divided, one nation separated from the other by the difference of speech. Even to-day, however, the blasphemous arrogance of mankind is apparent. In the erection of many great buildings, in the invention of many new arts, man is not seeking the welfare of his neighbor and the honor of God, but his own glory. It is necessary, time and again, for the Lord to interfere with a mighty hand, even as the day of the Lord will finally be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and he shall be brought low, Is. 2, 12.

THE GENERATION OF SHEM. — V. 10. **These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old and begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood.** The genealogical table of Shem is now repeated in detail, because the narrative gradually tends toward the story of the people of God, whose progenitor was Abraham, a descendant of Shem through Eber. V. 11. **And Shem lived, after he begat Arphaxad, five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.** V. 12. **And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years and begat Salah;** v. 13. **and Arphaxad lived, after he begat Salah, four hundred and three years and begat sons and daughters.** V. 14. **And Salah lived thirty years and begat Eber;** v. 15. **and Salah lived, after he begat Eber, four hundred and three years and begat sons and daughters.** Up to this point the ancestry of the Joktanites and of the Abrahamites follows the same line. V. 16. **And Eber lived four and thirty years and begat Peleg;** v. 17. **and Eber lived, after he begat Peleg, four hundred and thirty years and begat sons and daughters.** V. 18. **And Peleg lived thirty years and begat Reu;** v. 19. **and Peleg lived, after he begat Reu, two hundred and nine years and begat sons and daughters.** V. 20. **And Reu lived two and thirty years and begat Serug;** v. 21. **and Reu lived, after he begat Serug, two hundred and seven years and begat sons and daughters.** V. 22. **And Serug lived thirty years and begat Nahor;** v. 23. **and Serug lived, after he begat Nahor, two hundred years and begat sons and daughters.** V. 24. **And Nahor lived nine and twenty years and begat Terah;** v. 25. **and Nahor lived, after he begat Terah, an hundred and nineteen years and begat sons and daughters.** A careful comparison of this list with the genealogical table of chap. 5 shows a very decided shortening of the average life of man after the Flood. While Noah still reached the age of 950 years, the age of man, with Arphaxad, sank down below 500 years; this again, was reduced, with Peleg, to 239 years and with Nahor to 148 years. In the short space of eight generations, therefore, the average age of man was reduced almost to the level which it has maintained since. This was due partly to the change of climate on the surface of the earth, partly to the different mode of living. V. 26. **And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.** That is, the oldest son of Terah was born when he was seventy years old, and three sons are mentioned in this instance, Abram, afterward Abraham, as the father of the Jewish race, Nahor as the grandfather of Rebekah, and Haran as the father of Lot.

THE GENERATIONS OF TERAH. — V. 27. **Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.** Haran may have been the oldest son, and his son Lot was nearer to Abraham's age. V. 28. **And Haran died before, that is, during the lifetime of, his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.** This, then, was the ancestral home of this family of the descendants of Shem. V. 29. **And Abram and Nahor took them wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.** Marriages of comparatively close relatives were still the rule at that time, for Nahor married his niece, and Abram his half-sister, chap. 20, 12. V. 30. **But Sarai was barren; she had no child,** a fact which was, among the Jews, considered a great calamity, almost a curse, just as the fruitfulness of the mother was considered a great blessing. V. 31. **And Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran and dwelt there.** These all went forth together,

or with one another, under the leadership of Terah and Abram. In the case of Abram, he had, even now, received God's command to journey forth, Acts 7, 3, while in the case of Terah the migration was a part of God's dispensation, the first step of the journey which would bring Abram to the land of his inheritance. V. 32. **And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.** This notice rounds out the story of Terah, for he evidently died after Abram had gone forth to Canaan. Thus the less important personage is disposed of before the main history proceeds. It is the story of Abraham which now follows, for it was his generation and people that the Lord chose for His own; and from the seed of Abraham, in the fulness of time, the salvation which had been promised to the patriarchs before the Flood was to come upon the whole world.

CHAPTER 12.

Abraham's Call; His Journey to Canaan and to Egypt.

GOD CALLS ABRAHAM. — V. 1. **Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee.** Here the real story of Abram, or Abraham, begins, to which the author has led up in a very skilful manner. God gave him a command which imposed upon him a threefold renunciation. Abram was to leave his fatherland, both Haran and Ur of the Chaldees being included in Mesopotamia. He was to forsake the members of his tribe, the other Chaldaic descendants of Shem, all of them now addicted to heathenism. He was to go forth even from his father's house, that of Terah and his family. The expressions are purposely heaped to indicate that it meant for Abram a complete severing of family ties: leaving everything behind that he had ever held near and dear but his wife, he was to journey, as a stranger, into a land which he would see by and by. V. 2. **And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing;** v. 3. **and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.** Here are promises of both temporal and spiritual blessings. To the first belongs the fact that Abram's descendants were to be so great in number as to be a great nation. But of far greater importance are the promises that refer to spiritual gifts. For that Abram's name should be great, that the blessing of the Lord should rest upon him, that he should be distinguished so highly among men as to receive the thankful praises and the blessings of men and be shielded against any curse, that in him should be blessed all the families and tribes of the earth, all mankind: all this does not refer to any mere outward wealth which the Lord intended to shower upon Abram. The blessing rather, as the repetitions and extensions show, chap. 18, 18; 22, 18; 26, 4, indicated that Abram (or Abraham) was to be a source of everlasting spiritual gifts and blessings through his seed, through one descendant in the great and blessed nation which would call him father, namely, through the Messiah, Jesus Christ, Acts 3, 25. 26; Gal. 3, 16. The prophecy of the Seed of the woman, which had been narrowed down in a general way in the blessing upon Shem, was here given expressly to Abram and to the nation which was to descend from him.

ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY TO CANAAN. — V. 4. **So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.** Abram put his faith in the promise of the Lord and was obedient to His command, forsaking his fatherland, his acquaintances, and even his nearest relatives, to journey with his wife and his nephew to the new country of which the Lord had spoken. V. 5. **And Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.** Accustomed as they were to a nomadic life, they traveled by easy stages, until they came to Canaan, the entire journey being under God's direction, and therefore successful, Heb. 11, 8. All their wealth in cattle and servants, which they had acquired in Mesopotamia, they brought along with them. V. 6. **And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh.** So the caravan of which Abram was the head evidently entered the land of Canaan from the north, through what was afterward Galilee, passing down through the country in which his descendants were later to live, until he reached Sichem, or Shechem, approximately in the center of the land. Here he pitched his tent in a grove, under a terebinth, a tree similar to an oak, which belonged to one Moreh. Cp. Deut. 11, 30. **And the Canaanite was then in the land.** So Abram could not take possession of the land at once, but was only suffered to sojourn there as a stranger, Heb. 11, 9. V. 7. **And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land. And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.**

Although a member of a race that had forsaken the true God, the call of the Lord had turned the heart of Abram to Him in simple faith. When, therefore, the Lord appeared to him in a vision in Sichem and assured him that the entire land would some time belong to his descendants, Abram believed the Lord and worshiped Him by the erection of an altar. V. 8. **And he removed from thence,** broke up his encampment, and went **unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.** The geographical notation in many cases is that of the later age, in which the author lived, for the sake of a quicker understanding. Abram's new encampment was in the hill country of what was afterwards Ephraim, between Ai on the west and Lus, or Bethel, on the east. Here again he inaugurated the worship of the true God by preaching and prayer, for he felt responsible for his whole household and therefore taught also his slaves and house-servants the way of salvation. V. 9. **And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.** Once more he struck his tent and removed with all his possessions to the southernmost district of Canaan, where it borders upon the Arabian desert.

ABRAHAM DISSEMBLES IN EGYPT. — V. 10. **And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.** The frequent moves of Abram which the text indicate point to a growing scarcity of food; and the famine finally became so heavy that he removed to the land of Egypt with his herds. V. 11. **And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai, his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon;** v. 12. **therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.** V. 13. **Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.** The Bible, for our comfort and warning, relates the weaknesses of the saints as well as their acts of faith. Although Sarai was now some sixty-five years old, she still had her youthful bloom and beauty, and, since women in Egypt at that time went unveiled, Abram feared that his wife's beauty would tempt some powerful Egyptian to covet her for himself and, Abram as the husband being in the way, he would be disposed of by an execution. As his caravan was about to enter Egyptian territory, therefore, Abram arranged with his wife that they be known in Egypt as brother and sister. He felt that the Egyptians might take Sarai from him, but that his own life would be spared through his stratagem and that he would even be treated well for the sake of her whom the people believed to be his sister. This counsel of Abraham was the outgrowth of human weakness and doubt in the divine protection; it was an indication of temporary wavering on the part of Abram, for though the declaration was not altogether false, chap. 20, 12, neither was it the whole truth.

ABRAHAM'S STRATAGEM EXPOSED. — V. 14. **And it came to pass that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.** V. 15. **The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.** What Abram had feared came to pass, and at the same time the weakness of his scheme was exposed, for he had apparently not taken into consideration how he could keep his wife for himself and save her honor. The report of Sarai's beauty soon spread; the Egyptian princes praised her in the presence of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, and without much ceremony she was taken to Pharaoh's harem. V. 16. **And he entreated Abram well for her sake; and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.** These were the rich gifts of Pharaoh to the supposed brother of the woman whom he coveted for his wife, or one of his wives. These presents placed Abram into a peculiar predicament, for he must have felt that he was obtaining them under false pretenses, and yet he could not refuse them without exposing his scheme. V. 17. **And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.** It was, literally, great blows which the Lord inflicted, and apparently of a kind as to shield the honor of Sarai. Cp. chap. 20, 4. 6. In some manner also it was revealed to Pharaoh what the real situation was. V. 18. **And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?** V. 19. **Why saidst thou, She is my sister? So I might have taken her to me to wife. Now, therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.** When Pharaoh summoned Abram, the reproaches which he heaped upon him were well taken, and Abram was unable to say anything in his defense. The last words of the king were spoken in great anger: Take and go! V. 20. **And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.** The orders of Pharaoh were carried out in the sense in which they were given. His men saw to it that Abram and Sarai and all their possessions were safely, but surely, taken to the borders of the country. It was probably only a kind of

reverential fear of the God of Abram which restrained Pharaoh from taking revenge upon Abram in a very summary way. But we see here that the Lord turns even the mistakes and weaknesses of His believers to their advantage, guarding and protecting them against the various dangers into which their own foolishness tends to plunge them. The lesson teaches us that we, as the Lord's strangers and pilgrims here on earth, should make use of all circumspection, and constantly keep before our eyes the goal which He wants us to reach.

CHAPTER 13.

The Peaceful Settlement between Abraham and Lot.

Abraham Returns to Canaan. — V. 1. **And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.** Together with Lot, who, as we learn here, had accompanied him into Egypt, Abram now returns to Canaan with all his great possessions, choosing the same route for his return which he had taken in coming down. His first stopping-place was on the great plateau in the southern part of Canaan. V. 2. **And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.** This remark is here inserted in order to explain the difficulty which later arose between him and Lot. V. 3. **And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;** v. 4. **unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.** The journey northward naturally had to be made by easy stages, for it was slow traveling with large herds that were dependent for their food upon the pasturage along the way. But the caravans finally reached the neighborhood of their earlier sojourn once more, where their encampment had been before the famine, between Bethel and Ai. It is emphasized in the story that this was the place of the altar which Abram had made at his first stay in that country. That was the important point in the history of Abram, that his experience in Egypt had taught him to turn back to the Lord with all his heart. His desire was now centered in Him who was promised as his descendant, the Messiah, who was to bring blessing and salvation to the world. Therefore Abram again instituted services with prayer and preaching; he set up the worship of Jehovah with his family. He thus confessed the true God and the hope of his heart also before the heathen. Temporal, earthly gain does not constitute the real happiness of the believers, but the fact that they possess Christ and His salvation.

Lot Chooses the Plain of Sodom. — V. 5. **And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents.** V. 6. **And the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.** Both Abram and Lot had meanwhile grown immensely wealthy, possessing flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle, asses, and camels, together with the necessary slaves of both sexes to take care of the herding and the work in the encampment, which must have had the appearance of a regular tent city. The result was that the land was unable to provide enough food for the two sets of herds and flocks and the households as well; it would not stand for their living together any longer. V. 7. **And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.** Clashes between the herdmen of the two rich men were almost inevitable, since both parties tried to get the best pasturage for their masters. It was an uncomfortable situation, to say the least, and the matter was rendered still more complicated by the fact that the tribe of the Perizzites, of whose descent nothing is known, and the Canaanites were in possession of the best pastures, Lot and Abram being expected to divide between them what was left. V. 8. **And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren.** V. 9. **Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.** It was impossible, of course, to keep the herdsmen's feud from the masters, and if the latter had not taken steps to remedy the situation, a feud between families might have resulted, as the words of Abraham indicate. Abram's main argument is: "For brethren we are." An altercation, a quarrel, between strangers may yet be understood, even if it cannot be condoned, but between close relatives, never. Although Abram was the older, and Lot's uncle at that, he gave Lot his choice, declaring himself satisfied to take what remained. The word of Abram has thus rightly passed into a proverbial watchword of the peace-loving and yielding disposition, in all cases when a distinction and separation in the circumstances becomes necessary.

Lot's Choice; the Separation. — V. 10.

And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Lot selfishly took advantage of Abram in accepting his offer. He made a careful survey and calculation, and the valley of the Jordan appealed to him, since from the Sea of Galilee down to the Vale of Siddim (later the Dead Sea) it was richly watered, like Paradise, the garden of Jehovah, or like Egypt, whose soil was so rich on account of the annual overflow of the Nile. As far as Zoar, in fact, at the far southeastern side of the valley, the land seemed to be unequaled for richness. V. 11. **Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east; and they separated themselves the one from the other.** V. 12. **Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan; and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.** In spite of the fact that Lot acted so selfishly, Abram's policy resulted in their separating peacefully, like brothers. Lot departed toward the east with his possessions and tented, that is, he journeyed by easy stages, with ever new encampments, until he reached Sodom, where he made his home, while Abram remained in Canaan proper. Lot's choice may have given evidence of keen business ability, as well as a very selfish disposition, but it certainly was a dangerous choice. V. 13. **But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.** This remark, which ascribes to the inhabitants of Sodom a wickedness in unusual measure, even in the midst of heathendom, not only prepares for the later story of the city's fate, chap. 19, but it also throws some light upon the character of Lot, who chose this city for his home. He may have been one with Abraham in faith till now, but apparently avarice had taken hold of his heart, causing him to disregard the great moral dangers of a notoriously wicked city for his children, only for the sake of greater gain. From this time forth the worldly thoughts and inclinations strove in his heart with his faith and reverence for the true God.

GOD REPEATS HIS PROMISE. — V. 14. **And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward;** v. 15. **for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever.** The separation of Lot from Abram was, in a way, prophetical of the relation which would afterwards obtain between his descendants and those of Abram. And just at this time the Lord repeated His promise to Abram, bidding him look from the place where he then was, almost in the center of Canaan, in every direction, since this entire country was to be the possession of his descendants. Thus Abram, in spirit at least, if not in fact, was to claim the land of Canaan for his posterity. V. 16. **And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that, if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.** The double promise, that of possessing the land and that of having such an innumerable offspring, was, of course, addressed to Abram's faith and had to be accepted by him in faith, Heb. 11, 9. 10. V. 17. **Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.** This refers to an ancient custom according to which a person signified his claim to a piece of ground by walking around it. Though Abram did not possess so much as one foot of land, yet God's promise stood that his descendants should occupy the entire country as their own. All this has a wider significance. For, as one commentator has it, through Christ the promise is elevated out of its temporal form to the dignity of substance; through Him the whole world becomes a Canaan. To the numberless seed of Abram belong all men from all generations of the earth that hold the faith of Abram, or Abraham. Abraham is the father of us all, Rom. 4, 16. We that believe the promise concerning Christ belong to that great people of believers which has existed since the time of Adam and has its representatives in all nations of the earth. V. 18. **Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.** Abram was obedient to the Lord's word; he journeyed through the land in the course of the next years. He tented by easy stages until he finally made his home at Hebron, about in the center of the southern part of Canaan. There he lived in the grove of terebinths that belonged to the Amorite Mamre, chap. 14, 13. 24. One of his first acts here again was the erection of an altar to the Lord. He could not be without his regular worship, and he and his household met regularly for the service of Jehovah. It would undoubtedly result in much blessing if believers that settle in a new district or city would make the establishment of regular services of worship their first consideration.

CHAPTER 14.

The War of the Kings and the Rescue of Lot.

The Rebellion of the Valley Kings. — V. 1. **And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of nations,** v. 2. **that these made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and with Birsha, king of Gomorrah, Shinab, king of Admah, and Shemeber, king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.** Those were the days of the city-states, just before the rise of the great Eastern nations. According to contemporary documents, Amraphel of Shinar is to be identified with Ammu-rabi, or Khammurabi, king of Sumer, who shortly afterward founded the early Babylonian empire; Arioch of Ellasar was probably Eri-Aku, king of Larsa, a south Babylonian city-state; Chedorlaomer was Kudur-Lagamor, a near successor of Simti-Shilkhak, mentioned in ancient records of Elam, or Elymais; and Tidal, king of Goiim, or nations, was Tudh-khulu, king of Gutium, in the southwestern part of what was afterward Amraphel's territory.[4] These four kings had formed a confederacy for the purpose of extending their power and to that end waged war with the five kings of the vale of Siddim, in the southeastern part of Canaan, where their city-states also formed a confederacy. V. 3. **All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea.** At the time when this history was written, the vale of Siddim was no longer in existence, its former fruitful fields being covered by the waters of the Dead Sea. Cp. chap. 19, 24. 25. V. 4. **Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.** Chedorlaomer at that time was the head of the northern confederacy, and therefore the rebellion of the southern kings and their refusal to pay tribute is represented as being directed against him. V. 5. **And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,** v. 6. **and the Horites in their Mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.** V. 7. **And they returned and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.** It was a campaign of revenge and conquest which the kings of the northern, or Babylonian, confederacy undertook under the leadership of Chedorlaomer. Coming down with their armies, they took their way over Damascus and then turned south through the country east of the Jordan. They first gained a decisive victory over the Rephaim, a tribe of giants then living in the highlands of Bashan, their capital being Ashteroth Karnaim, "the two-horned Ashteroth." They next conquered the Zuzim, also a race of giants, occupying the eastern tableland, south of Bashan and Gilead. Continuing southward, the Babylonian armies overthrew the armies of the Emim, "the terrible ones," whose capital was Shaveh Kiriathaim, "the dale of the two cities." The last country to yield to the conquerors was that of the Horim, a race of cave-dwellers south of what was afterward the Dead Sea. Chedorlaomer now turned back toward the west and north, invaded the country afterward occupied by the Amalekites, with the capital Kadesh Barnea, and that of the Amorites, who lived just east of the Sea of the Plain, afterward the Dead Sea. Both nations were conquered by the armies of the northern confederacy. It was the first of a long series of campaigns of conquest that were conducted by the ancient empires of the Euphrates Valley.

The Capture of Lot. — V. 8. **And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;** v. 9. **with Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and with Tidal, king of nations, and Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar; four kings with five.** Flushed with their recent conquests, by which they had eliminated all the possible confederates of the southern confederacy, the kings of the north poured their victorious hordes into the vale of Siddim, near the beautiful Sea of the Plain. V. 10. **And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.** This was the outcome of the battle: the five southern kings were routed by the armies of the north and sought to save their lives. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were familiar with the country and fell into one of the asphalt-pits which abounded in the neighborhood, that is, they quickly hid themselves there, while their allies fled to the secluded canyons of what was afterward the country of Moab, where the many hiding-places prevented their being found by the enemy. V. 11. **And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their victuals, and went their way.** Even in those days the spoils belonged to the victors; they plundered the cities of the conquered armies, down to the last remnant of food, and then marched on. V. 12. **And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and de-**

4) Cp. Mercer, *Extra-Biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History*, 5. 6.

parted. Thus Lot was obliged to suffer with the godless people among whom he lived, whose city he had chosen for his home. This was to prove an excellent chastisement and correction for him.

ABRAHAM'S MARCH AND VICTORY. — V. 13. **And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram, the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram.** Abram, living at some distance from the scene of all these happenings, was not aware of the straits into which Lot had fallen, until a fugitive from the battle brought him the news. He was known as the Hebrew, the immigrant from the other side of the Euphrates, and he was still living in the grove of terebinths which belonged to Mamre, the Amorite. V. 14. **And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.** By the time Abram received the news, the enemies had gotten a long start on their way to their home country. But he acted with commendable speed and energy, for it was his brother, his near relative, whose life was in danger. He immediately assembled the slaves that had been born in his house and had been trained in the use of arms, and literally poured them forth in pursuit of the Babylonian armies, in proper battle array. There were three hundred and eighteen of these servants, besides the men of Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, that went with Abram to the extreme northern boundary of Gilead, in Perea, where the city of Dan was afterward situated. V. 15. **And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.** By making use of strategy and with the help of Almighty God, before whom mere numbers are not the deciding factor, Abram was able to put the Babylonian armies to rout and even to pursue them northward from Damascus (literally, on the left hand, as one faces the east), to a little village now known as Hoba. V. 16. **And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.** The whole spoil of the enemy was thus taken from them by Abram's little army, who thereby, in magnanimous love, rewarded Lot good for evil. Thus true faith produces holy courage and is able to face and to overcome all dangers, if the work in which a believer is engaged is one which meets with the approval of God.

ABRAHAM'S RETURN. — V. 17. **And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.** The news of Abram's victory preceded him, for, with all the spoil and the women, he was unable to travel so rapidly as he had hurried in pursuit. The king of Sodom, who had saved his life by his self-possession, went forth to meet the returning victors at a place situated probably on the Kidron, which from that time bore the name "King's Dale," 2 Sam. 18, 18. V. 18. **And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God.** Of this Melchizedek, king of Salem, probably Jerusalem, nothing more is known. Cp. Heb. 7, 3. He seems to have been one of those that clung to the worship of the true God after the majority of the people had plunged into the depths of heathendom; to this God he was a priest. He now showed his appreciation and gratitude toward Abram and his little army by bringing forth bread and wine to refresh and strengthen the weary soldiers. V. 19. **And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth;** v. 20. **and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes of all.** So Melchizedek transmitted to Abram the blessing of God, of the Most Exalted One, of the Founder and Owner of heaven and earth. And, in turn, he praised the Lord, the Exalted One, to whom the victory of Abram must be ascribed. It was a prayer for prosperity and blessing, in beautiful, poetical form. Melchizedek is a type of Christ, the great High Priest of the New Testament, Ps. 110, 4, and the entire 7th chapter of Hebrews is really a commentary on this passage. Abram acknowledged Melchizedek as a priest by giving him tithes of all, Heb. 7, 4. This was the more important transaction at the meeting. V. 21. **And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.** His intention was to repay Abram for the work which he performed in delivering the captive Sodomites, especially the women and children, from the hands of the enemy. He asked only for the souls, the people whom Abram had brought back, proposing that Abram keep the spoil that had originally belonged to the men of Sodom, in return for his victory. V. 22. **And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the Possessor of heaven and earth,** v. 23. **that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich;** v. 24. **save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.** It is a kind, but solemn and emphatic refusal. With a confession in the true God, in whose name he

swears, Abram declares that the men belonging to his allies may take advantage of the offer and claim their share of the spoils, and he would be willing to accept what his servants had consumed in food during their campaign; but as for himself, not even a thread or a sandal-strap would he accept from the king of Sodom, lest the latter might afterward boast that Abram owed his riches to him. Abram wanted to be under no obligations to the heathen king. Even so the believers to-day are encouraged to do good also to the unbelievers; but beyond that they should not go, lest their Christianity be endangered.

CHAPTER 15.

The Blessing upon Abraham Renewed.

God's Promise to Abraham. — V. 1. **After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy Shield and thy exceeding great Reward.** After these happenings, after Abram had returned to his home at Hebron, the Lord spoke to him in a vision, while Abram was in a state of ecstasy, under the influence of God. Solemnly Jehovah reassures His servant in the face of the many dangers that surround him, in view, also, of the fact that he is still without a child: Do not fear; I am to thee a Shield, thy very great Reward. The Lord promised to defend him in all conflicts and so to bless him as to be his Reward Himself. V. 2. **And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?** V. 3. **And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is my heir.** The promise which the Lord had given him, chap. 12, 2, seemed a thing of the far-distant past, and Abram's faith was sorely tried. Time was going on from day to day, from year to year, and still he was childless, without offspring, forsaken. There seemed to be but one conclusion possible, namely, that one of his house-slaves, his steward, Eliezer of Damascus, would be his heir. That is implied in the unfinished sentence, and the repetition of the same thought emphasizes the feeling of desolation which was stealing over the heart of Abram. V. 4. **And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.** Not merely a member of the household of Abram, but his own natural son should be the heir of his goods, which implies that he should also be the heir of the Messianic prophecy. V. 5. **And He brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.** God's patience has a wonderful sustaining and strengthening power. In order to impress upon His servant the exact meaning of His promise, the Lord brought him outside and had him look closely at the starry heavens, whether he felt able to count the stars. So great, in brief, would be the number of his descendants. This promise, in the last analysis, is Messianic. Through the one Seed, Christ, all nations on earth were to be blessed, and all men of all nations that have accepted the only salvation, that in Jesus Christ, are the descendants of Abraham in truth; they are the people of God, the spiritual Israel, Rom. 4, 18. V. 6. **And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.** Cp. Rom. 4, 5. Abram placed his trust in the promise of the Lord with all it implied, and therefore the Lord accepted him into the covenant of His grace. That is the way of salvation for all sinners, the way of obtaining that true righteousness by which we are justified before God. Christ has earned blessing, salvation, righteousness for all men, and all that accept this promise in faith have these wonderful gifts, are pure, holy, and righteous before God, because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them.

The Covenant Sacrifice. — V. 7. **And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.** In preparing to give Abram a special sign of the covenant's consummation and to assure him of the fact that his descendants would be the possessors of the land of Canaan, the Lord introduces Himself as He whose conduct in the past is a guarantee of His faithfulness in the future. V. 8. **And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?** This was not a question of doubt, but of a desire for some assurance in the case of this promise which transcended all human understanding. He was asking for a covenant sign. V. 9. **And He said unto him, Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.** All of these were sacrificial animals, which, although they were not burned as sacrifices to Jehovah, yet were to be consecrated to Him, Lev. 1, 2. 14. V. 10. **And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not.** V. 11. **And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.** V. 12. **And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.** At the direction of God, Abram prepared

the sacrificial animals, the heifer, the ram, and the goat being cut in half lengthwise and the several pieces laid over against one another, by pairs, while the birds were not divided. The entire proceeding filled Abram with the deepest awe. When the birds of prey, eagles and vultures, came down to feed on the carcasses, Abram turned them away, drove them off. The ceremonial which was here enacted was that in use from ancient times, the contracting parties passing between the halves of the dead animals to indicate their reconciliation to a unity. The culmination of the strange scene came when, as the sun was setting, Abram was overcome by a deep sleep and a great horror fell upon him.

THE FOUNDING OF THE COVENANT. — V. 13. **And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;** v. 14. **and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.** The Lord Himself gives the explanation of some of the symbolical acts connected with the establishing of the covenant between Him and Abram. The latter should know for sure that his descendants would be strangers in a strange land for a matter of four hundred years, until the Lord Himself would execute judgment in their behalf and bring them out of the house of bondage, not empty, but with considerable property. V. 15. **And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.** Abram himself would not be obliged to share in the afflictions which would come upon his children, but would die in peace, at an advanced age. V. 16. **But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.** The generations at that time were still reckoned at approximately one hundred years, and so four generations would represent, in round numbers, four hundred years. By that time the iniquity of the Amorites, here named as the representatives of all the Canaanites, would be fulfilled, and their annihilation by the children of Israel would come upon them as the judgment of the Lord. V. 17. **And it came to pass that, when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.** These happenings completed the symbolical events connected with the founding of the covenant between the Lord and Abram. A smoking furnace, like that used in potteries, and a torch, or cresset, passed between the halves of the animals, symbols of the glory of the Lord in fire. The animals thus are a type of the descendants of Abraham, of the children of Israel, as they were tortured almost unto death, especially by the Egyptians. The birds of prey are pictures of these enemies of Israel. That these vultures were driven away indicates that the Lord would deliver His people for the sake of the promise made to Abram. The great darkness and the horror pointed to the severity of the miseries and tribulations which would strike the Israelites. But that finally the glory of the Lord passed between the halves of the animals showed that God would at the last bring help to His people and deliver them from the hands of all their enemies. V. 18. **In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates;** these two rivers would be the southern and northern boundary lines of the kingdom of Israel respectively, the brook of Egypt, the Wady el Arisch, or Rhinocolura, and the Euphrates: v. 19. **the Kenites,** in the southeastern part of Canaan, **and the Kenizzites,** probably west of them, **and the Kadmonites,** toward the Euphrates, v. 20. **and the Hittites,** especially numerous in what was afterward Northern Galilee, **and the Perizzites,** in what was later Eastern Samaria, **and the Rephaims,** in the Perean country east of the Jordan, v. 21. **and the Amorites,** in the region west of the Dead Sea, **and the Canaanites,** in the upper valley of the Jordan and in the plain of Sharon, **and the Girgashites,** west of the Sea of Galilee, **and the Jebusites,** in what was later Northern Judea. The Lord purposely enumerates peoples living in every part of Canaan, in order to impress upon Abram the completeness of the possession which his descendants would enjoy. His promises never return to Him void, and He has a way of overcoming our weak faith by the perfection of His fulfilment, beyond all that we ask or understand.

CHAPTER 16.

The Flight of Hagar and the Birth of Ishmael.

HAGAR GIVEN TO ABRAHAM. — V. 1. **Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children; and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.** V. 2a. **And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath constrained me from bearing; I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her.** The fact of Sarai's barrenness had been mentioned at the time of their coming to Canaan, chap. 11, 30. It is repeated here for the sake of the emphasis upon the miracle which the Lord wrought in her case. Ten years had now passed by, and yet, in spite of the promise, chap. 15, 4, Sarai remained without a child. She therefore became impatient and suggested to Abram that,

since the Lord hindered her from bearing, denied her offspring, her Egyptian slave Hagar might be the one through whom she was to have children, that her family might be built up through the slave. According to the custom of the Orient the children of slaves belonged to the master and mistress, Ex. 21, 4; 1 Chron. 2, 35. V. 2 b. **And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.** V. 3. **And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.** Although Abram also should have shown more faith and patience, he consented to the plan of his wife, not for fleshly reasons, but with the earnest desire for offspring, for that seed which was to be as the stars of the heaven in number.

HAGAR'S PRIDE AND FLIGHT. — V. 4. **And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.** The plan of Sarai to which Abram had consented was decidedly human and did not have the divine approval. Hagar having conceived, her mistress was looked down upon in her eyes. The Jews, like the Orientals in general, regarded barrenness as a great evil and a divine punishment, Lev. 20, 20, and fruitfulness as a great good and a divine blessing, Ex. 23, 26; Deut. 7, 14. Still, the attitude of Hagar was a presumption, since she was not Abram's second wife, but retained her subordinate position throughout. V. 5. **And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee; I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between me and thee.** This outburst on the part of Sarai was altogether unjustified; what she was suffering came upon her in consequence of her interference with God's plans. Yet she wanted the wrong and injury which had been heaped upon her to be blamed upon her husband, and even called upon Jehovah to be the judge between them. Sarai's outburst of temper was probably due to the very indifference which Abram showed with regard to the slave woman, for she wanted him to have seen and rebuked the latter's insolence, whereas he held that the relations in the household had in no way been altered by the consequence of Sarai's plan. V. 6. **But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.** This was not evading the responsibility, but insisting upon its remaining where it had been during the entire incident: Hagar was still the slave of Sarai, who might use force in making her conscious of her subordinate position. **And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.** The mistress took measures to make the slave woman feel her power, probably by demanding that the latter perform the most menial services in the household, whereas Hagar seems to have occupied a position of some importance before. The proud spirit of the slave refusing to yield to such treatment, she fled from Hebron, willing rather to brave the wilderness than to submit to Sarai's harsh treatment. Thus the sins and weaknesses of the saints are openly narrated in Scriptures, the story forming a mirror in which we may see our own hearts.

THE RETURN OF HAGAR AND THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL. — V. 7. **And the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.** The providence of the Lord was watching over this erring child. The great Angel of the Lord, the Son of God as He often appeared in the Old Testament, went out and found her by a spring of water near Shur, on the way to Egypt, her old home. V. 8. **And He said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou, and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.** From the entire story it is apparent that the angel speaking with Hagar is not an ordinary, created angel, but the Son of God, who even in the Old Testament was near His people and proved a very effective help to the patriarchs of Israel. Upon His calling Hagar by name and demanding an account of her coming and going, the slave gave a truthful answer. She herself was probably a believer in the true God, as a member of Abram's home congregation. V. 9. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.** The Lord having brought Hagar to a sense of her real position in the house of Abram, namely, that she was Sarai's maid, not Abram's wife, now bids her return to her duty, to humble herself under her mistress's hand. V. 10. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.** First the call to duty, then the gracious promise, one which was especially welcome to the Oriental mother, and ought to be to the mothers of all time. V. 11. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.** V. 12. **And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.** Because the fruit of her body was the seed of Abram, Hagar was to return to her mistress, and for the sake of his father the promise of innumerable progeny is given. The very name of her son is given her, namely, Ishmael, "God hears," because the Lord had heeded the cry of her misery and distress. This son should, moreover, unlike his mother, be free from the oppression of men, as free as the wild ass of the deserts, wild-roving and untamable; and his

descendants would be characterized by the ceaseless feuds between themselves and with their neighbors, as they dwelt in the presence of their brethren, of the children of Israel, to whom they were a constant menace and challenge. To this day the Ishmaelites are in unimpaired, free possession of the great peninsula lying between the Euphrates, the Isthmus of Suez, and the Red Sea, whence they have spread over wide districts in North Africa and Southern Asia. V. 13. **And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou, God, seest me; for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?** V. 14. **Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.** Hagar realized that it was no ordinary angel that had spoken with her, as her confession shows, for she calls Him: Thou art a God that sees me; for His all-seeing eye had not overlooked the helpless and forsaken, even in that remote corner of the desert. She had experienced the goodness and mercy of the Lord; she had had the privilege of seeing and speaking with Him that had looked after her and protected her. The incident even gave a name to the spring in the desert, since it was afterward known as "the well of Him that lives and sees me." It is located in the wilderness, south of Beersheba. V. 15. **And Hagar bare Abram a son; and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.** V. 16. **And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.** To the son which Hagar bore after her return to his house, Abram, then eighty-six years old, gave the name Ishmael, the mother undoubtedly having given him an account of the occurrence in the desert which caused her to return. Thus the places and the times which remind us of special acts of God's goodness and mercy are written in the memories of the believers, and ever and again cause them to break forth in prayers of thankfulness.

CHAPTER 17.

The Confirmation of God's Covenant.

THE PROMISE RENEWED. — V. 1. **And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the almighty God; walk before Me and be thou perfect.** Twenty-four years Abram had now been a stranger in Canaan, thirteen years had elapsed since the birth of Ishmael, and still the patience of Abram and Sarai was sorely tried, still no child came to gladden their hearts. But the Lord now appeared to Abram once more, calling Himself the almighty God, and bidding His servant walk before Him, lead his entire life so as to be without reproach. Every one that is justified by faith will so conduct himself in his entire life and actions as to give all honor to God and to place all trust in Him, even if He should delay in the fulfilment of some promise. V. 2. **And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.** The promise of an innumerable progeny, as based upon the covenant of God, is here repeated and intensified, particular stress being placed upon the exceedingly great number of descendants. V. 3. **And Abram fell on his face,** in the humility of his faith and of overpowering joy. **And God talked with him, saying,** v. 4. **As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.** The covenant was not here established, for it was already in power, but it was now to be realized, the Lord on His part decreeing that Abram was to be the father of a multitude of nations. The almighty Lord always fulfils in due time what He promises to His children. V. 5. **Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.** Thus Abraham is again shown the great nation which through his Seed, the Messiah, was to be gathered out of all nations, the great congregation of all the believers. Rom. 4, 17. In token of this double promise God changed the name of Abram, "exalted father," to Abraham, "father of a mass, noise, tumult of nations," Himself explaining that He had set him to be the father of a multitude of nations. V. 6. **And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.** Tribes and people, exalted, mighty, and rich kings were among the descendants of Abraham; and the promise is again so wide and all-encompassing that it must be taken to include especially the spiritual blessings assured to those who are the descendants of Abraham in faith. V. 7. **And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.** Here also the fact that God, in the realization of the covenant, will be an everlasting Source and Fountainhead of goodness and mercy to the real offspring of Abraham, is emphasized. V. 8. **And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.** The continual repetition of the emphasis upon the everlasting covenant and the everlasting possession shows that the covenant and the promised inheritance included the spiritual seed, the sum total of those that would accept God with the faith of Abraham, and also the

heavenly Canaan, with all the blessings assured to us by the merits of Christ, in whom alone God is our God.

Circumcision Instituted. — V. 9. **And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations.** The promise of goodness and mercy on the part of God imposes an obligation on man to keep the provisions of His covenant. V. 10. **This is My covenant, which ye shall keep between Me and you and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you shall be circumcised.** So circumcision, the operation by which the foreskin of the flesh is removed, is not a mere hygienic measure, but a religious rite, a part of God's covenant, a sacrament of His mercy. V. 11. **And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you.** V. 12. **And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.** V. 13. **He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.** V. 14. **And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.** Thus circumcision was a sacrament, a means of grace, in the Old Testament, a rite through which the Lord transmitted the blessings of His covenant to the children of Abraham. Its provisions were simple, the act itself being plainly indicated, the purpose being the sign of the covenant, the time being eight days, or the eighth day after birth, the extent making it include not only male children, but also slaves, both those born in the master's home and those bought elsewhere, and the inviolability of the act being such as to cause every male that had not submitted to this provision of the covenant to be cut off by an act of divine judgment or by an early death. The significance of the sacrament consisted in this, that the descendants of Abraham were to circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, be a holy people unto the Lord, Deut. 10, 16. But above all, circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4, 11, and a type of Holy Baptism, the corresponding sacrament of the New Testament. Through the water of Baptism, as an external sign, the righteousness of God, the forgiveness of sins, is sealed unto us.

A Child Promised to Sarah. — V. 15. **And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai, thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.** This change of names is significant, for the wife of Abraham, heretofore known as Sarai, "the princely," "heroine," was hereafter to be called Sarah, "princess," as the ancestress of princes and kings. Thus the promise of God narrowed down, first from a member of Abraham's household to a son of his own body, and now to his own son by Sarah, his wife, not by some slave woman. V. 16. **And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.** The emphasis is expressly laid upon the fact that the happy event of the birth of a son to Sarah is a result of the blessing of God. For whereas this is true in the case of every wife, it was particularly true in the case of Sarah, upon whom the Lord had laid the cross of barrenness. V. 17. **Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?** The marvel of such a promise in the circumstances as Abraham knew them, himself a man of a hundred years and Sarah ninety years old, and yet they should become parents, — this filled him with such awe that he sank to the ground, and with such joy that he was constrained to laugh. He was filled with adoration and praise of the power and mercy of God. V. 18. **And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before Thee!** This was not spoken in the fear that the Lord would now cause Ishmael to die, but as a prayer that Ishmael might have part in the blessings of the covenant. V. 19. **And God said, Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him.** The Lord emphasizes that the son of Sarah should be the bearer of the covenant, he whom Abraham should name Isaac (he that laughs); he was to transmit the Messianic promise to his children after him, a promise which would not concern their temporal welfare so much as their spiritual blessings, and would therefore be of interest also to the spiritual descendants of Isaac. V. 20. **And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.** Ishmael had been begotten after the flesh, and could therefore not be the bearer of the promise, Gal. 4, 30. He was to be blessed most richly with blessings of this life: twelve princes were to be his descendants, and the number of his offspring would be exceedingly great. V. 21. **But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.** God had, even now, appointed the time when Isaac should be born. And this child of promise should be the bearer of the Messianic promise. For since it stands to reason and clearly fol-

lows from the Scriptural account that Abraham taught all his children the fear of the true God, we must conclude that the special progeny of Abraham and Isaac to which the Lord here refers must be the sum total of that spiritual offspring, all men who by the faith of Abraham become the children of Abraham, Rom. 4, 11—17. V. 22. **And he left off talking with him. And God went up from Abraham.** After God had given all the necessary commands to Abraham, the vision came to a close.

ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE. — V. 23. **And Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him.** The prompt and literal obedience which Abraham rendered is an evidence of his faith; for that very day he performed the rite of circumcision upon Ishmael and upon all his men, whether born while in his possession or bought with his money, and upon himself. V. 24. **And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.** V. 25. **And Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.** V. 26. **In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael, his son.** V. 27. **And all the men of his house, born in the house and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.** Thus was the first congregation under the Old Testament covenant organized.

CHAPTER 18.

The Visit of the Lord to Abraham.

ABRAHAM WELCOMES THE LORD AND THE ANGELS. — V. 1. **And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains,** that is, the groves of terebinths, the oaks of Canaan, **of Mamre,** the Amorite, **at Hebron.** This was the sixth visit, or appearance, of the Lord to His servant. **And he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day,** shortly before noon. V. 2. **And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.** It was not a case of a slow approach, but of a sudden appearance. A moment before no one had been in sight, and now three men stood by him, looming over him as he reclined on his chair or couch. **And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground.** As the strangers were still a few steps away, Abraham, with true Oriental hospitality, ran forward to meet them, and since he recognized in one of them the Lord, he bowed down before them in worshipful homage. Two of the visitors were angels, chap. 19, 1; the third was the Lord Himself, Heb. 13, 2, the Angel of the Lord in the peculiar sense of the word, as it is applied to the Son of God in the Old Testament. V. 3. **And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant.** V. 4. **Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree;** v. 5. **and I will fetch a morsel of bread; and comfort ye your hearts. After that ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant.** The entire invitation of Abraham shows that this was not a case of ordinary hospitality to passing strangers, but a work of love performed for the Lord. He wanted the favor of the Lord, of which he was sure by reason of the covenant, to abide with him; hence the urgency of the prayer. There is nothing lacking in the cordial nature of the invitation: Let a little water be taken, and wash your feet. The sandals of the travelers having been removed, the house-slaves provided the water for washing off the dust. Under the tree they were then to recline, resting upon their arms as supports, while Abraham hurried to have dinner prepared, the principal meal being eaten at noon, 1 Kings 20, 16. He spoke in a deprecating way of the small meal which he was able to offer them: a bit of bread. Yet he hoped that what he had to offer would be sufficient to refresh their hearts before continuing their journey. Thus the assurance that their entertainment would cause neither trouble nor expenditure was intended to remove any hesitation about accepting his hospitality. **And they said, So do as thou hast said.** They did not want him to go to any trouble; they accepted only with the condition that he would serve but a simple repast. V. 6. **And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.** With three seahs, about three pecks, or thirty liters, of the finest flour Sarah was quickly to bake round, unleavened cakes on the hot stones of the hearth. V. 7. **And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.** Abraham personally selected a young and tender calf from the corral and entrusted it to one of the house-boys, who was to see to its preparation. V. 8. **And he took butter and milk and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.** Although the meal was simple, it was plentiful. Abraham himself did not sit down with his guests, but stood in order to wait upon them and carry out their slightest wish.

The eating of physical food on the part of the heavenly beings was a true partaking of the meal, something like that of the resurrected Christ, Luke 24, 41 ff.; but it remains a miracle to our comprehension. The entire incident pointed forward to the time when the Son of God visited His people, lived among them, and, above all, let them see His kindness and His love.

The Specific Promise of Isaac's Birth. — V. 9. **And they said unto him, Where is Sarah, thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.** V. 10. **And He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son.** The Lord Himself, as the spokesman, opened the conversation by inquiring after Sarah. Abraham, without the hesitation which the modern perverted life might cause him to feel, could answer that she was inside the tent. Then the Lord announced to him his visit at the same time in the next year, stating that Sarah would then have a son. **And Sarah heard it in the tent-door which was behind Him.** V. 11. **Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.** They were both beyond the usual age when procreation was normally possible. V. 12. **Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure,** as the result of the return to youthful vigor, **my lord,** my husband, who is the head of the household, **being old also?** That was not the joyful laughter of faith, as in the case of Abraham, but a sneer of incredulity, of doubt. V. 13. **And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?** Sarah had supposed herself unnoticed, since she was behind the curtain of the tent, and her laughing had been in her heart only. But the omniscient Lord knew her thoughts and reproved her doubts. V. 14. **Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.** The Lord, the almighty God, is nevertheless also the merciful God, for He did not withdraw His promise to visit Abraham and Sarah in the gift of the son whom they had long waited for; there was nothing too difficult for Him to perform. V. 15. **Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And He said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.** In her chagrin at being discovered, Sarah hastily denied the charge, but the Lord added a second reproof, convicting her of her falsehood. As the following events showed, Sarah accepted the reproof and turned to the Lord in true faith, for through faith she received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child, Heb. 11, 11. Even now the Word of God reproves the sins and weaknesses of the believers, especially their lack of trusting faith. And we should at all times receive His reprimands with all humility.

The Lord Reveals His Plan Regarding Sodom. — V. 16. **And the men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.** The rising of the Lord and His two companions and their looking over into the direction of Sodom was a signal to Abraham that their mission in his house had been accomplished, and so he, as a thoughtful host, accompanied them for some distance. V. 17. **And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do,** v. 18. **seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?** V. 19. **For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him.** These words of the Lord were apparently addressed to the angels. The question was whether He should let Abraham know at once that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was an act of His avenging justice. He had destined Abraham to be not only the father of a great and mighty nation, the children of Israel, but also the spiritual father of the true Israel of all times. Besides, Abraham not only led a life conforming to the will of the Lord for himself, but the Lord also knew, in prevenient love, and had chosen him for that purpose, that he would teach his children and all his progeny carefully to keep the way of Jehovah, of true piety, to exercise righteousness and judgment, and the Lord could thus fulfil all His promises upon them. Thus the destruction of Sodom and the surrounding country should be before the eyes of the children of Israel always as a monument of God's avenging justice, as an example of the end of the wicked. In revealing to Abraham the reason for the destruction of the wicked cities, the Lord wanted Abraham to see the justice of the punishment, which no intercession could hope to turn aside. V. 20. **And the Lord said,** turning now directly to Abraham, **Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,** v. 21. **I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.** The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were of a nature to cry to heaven for revenge and punishment: "The cry about Sodom and Gomorrah — yea, it is great; and their sin — truly it is very heavy!" The Lord's purpose, therefore, was to convince Himself whether the inhabitants of these cities, according to the cry that had come to Him, had reached the limit of wickedness or not. It was a case of mercy's meeting together with righteousness. V. 22. **And the men**

turned their faces from thence and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. As the two angels continued their journey toward Sodom alone, Abraham stood before the Lord, his bold attitude signifying that he had an important matter to communicate. As the friend of God, a designation which is shared by all believers, Jas. 2, 23, he dared to enter a bold plea in behalf of such children of God as might possibly be found in the doomed cities.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION. — V. 23. **And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?** It was a holy boldness which Abraham here displayed, both in drawing near to the Lord until he stood face to face with Him, and in speaking as he did: Surely Thou wilt not sweep off the righteous with the godless! V. 24. **Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?** V. 25. **That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?** The form of the petition is almost presumptuous, but it is the presumption of faith. It is not Abraham's personal interest in his nephew Lot that prompts him to such boldness, but the belief in the righteousness of God, who surely would not permit the righteous to be slain with the wicked. V. 26. **And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, I will spare all the place for their sakes.** This assurance of the Lord encourages Abraham to continue his pleading, although in a lowly, humble form. V. 27. **And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.** V. 28. **Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; wilt Thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And He said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.** This is a glorious example for the believers of all times, for they also are dust as to their origin and ashes as to their end, and yet, as children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, they may freely and boldly speak to their heavenly Father and implore Him with the greatest daring. V. 29. **And he spake unto Him yet again and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And He said, I will not do it for forty's sake.** V. 30. **And he said unto Him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.** V. 31. **And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.** V. 32. **And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.** The entire prayer is a splendid example of the importunity of the believer's prayer. Cp. Luke 11, 8. That is the chief content of the true intercessory pleading, namely, to ask the Lord for mercy, for forgiveness. Such prayer is well-pleasing to the Lord; for its sake He still preserves the sinful world, giving to the unbelievers time for repentance. The lesson of true prayer cannot be learned too well. V. 33. **And the Lord went His way as soon as He had left communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned into his place.** The Lord had patiently and gladly listened to the intercession of Abraham, and it was for his sake that He arranged for the escape of Lot. But so far as the cities were concerned, the measure of their sins was full, their punishment was bound to come. And so the Lord made arrangements to carry out His intention, while Abraham returned to his home near Hebron.

CHAPTER 19.

The Destruction of Sodom.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ANGELS. — V. 1. **And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. And Lot, seeing them, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.** The two angels, having left Hebron about noon, reached the city of Sodom about sundown. Lot was sitting in the gate, within the arched entrance to the city, where deep recesses on either side furnished seats, and where commercial and political business was transacted. With true Oriental hospitality, Lot arose to meet the approaching travelers, bowing himself down to the ground in token of the fact that they might consider him their servant in the matter of finding them a place of lodging. V. 2. **And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early and go on your ways. In all sincerity, Lot would have accounted it an honor to have the travelers turn aside and enter his house. They were welcome to make use of the comforts of his home, and he would not detain them on the morrow. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.** Having come to the city for the purpose of investigating conditions thoroughly, the angels would have pre-

ferred to remain in the open, wide space just inside the entrance of the city. V. 3. **And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.** Lot did his duty as Oriental host. His invitation becoming so very urgent, the angels consented to remain in his house overnight, where he personally superintended their entertainment. This is one of the instances to which the writer to the Hebrews has reference when he writes: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Heb. 13, 2.

THE EVIL INTENTION OF THE SODOMITES. — V. 4. **But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter;** v. 5. **and they called unto Lot and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us that we may know them.** The evening meal having been eaten, the people of Lot's household, together with their guests, were about to retire for the night, when they were rudely disturbed. Emphasis is laid upon the fact that all the people, even down to the last man, took part in this shameless demand, openly stating that they wanted to abuse the guests of Lot in a violation of nature which was one of the greatest curses of heathenism, the sin of pederasty. All the men of Sodom were guilty of this lustful abomination, of this demonic error. Cp. Rom. 1, 27. V. 6. **And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,** v. 7. **and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.** This was the consequence of Lot's having settled in the midst of a godless and wicked people. Lot, having gone out and locked the door behind him in order to protect his guests, confronted a mob that had gone crazy with unnatural lust. His plea, in which he addressed them as brethren and begged them not to act in such a wicked manner, fell on deaf ears. V. 8. **Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes; only unto these men do nothing, for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.** So sacred were the persons and the lives of his guests in the eyes of Lot that he was willing to set aside even his fatherly feeling and duty and to sacrifice his daughters to the lust of the brutes out in the street, if the latter would but be satisfied. As for the guests, he reminds the mob of the duty of hospitality; for it was in order to be sheltered against danger and wickedness that they had entered his house. To try to hinder a sin by committing sin can never be excused, and the fact of Lot's offer may be accounted for only by the fact of his extreme consternation. V. 9. **And they said, Stand back,** that is, stand aside, make room for us to enter. **And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge. Now will we deal worse with thee than with them.** Their coarse objection is that this single man, the one that had come and was living as a stranger among them with their permission, now was passing a verdict upon their behavior, as he had undoubtedly done often before, 2 Pet. 2, 7. 8. Crazed with lust, they now pressed forward to kill Lot and then to carry out their intention upon his guests. **And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.** It was a moment of the greatest danger. V. 10. **But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.** V. 11. **And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.** The angels interfered when the danger was at its height. With a quick movement they drew Lot into the house and locked the door. And the members of the crazed mob were stricken with blindness; they were deprived of their sight and, at the same time, confused in their minds. Although they continued their efforts to find the door which led through the arched entrance into the interior of the house, they were unable to do so, and finally grew tired and desisted. This incident proved to the angels that all the inhabitants of Sodom were steeped in the vices which cried to heaven, for Sodomitic lewdness cries to heaven, as the sinners of our days will also find out to their eternal sorrow. And let us not forget that there is a sin which is even worse than that of the Sodomites, namely, that of rejecting Christ, His Word, and His grace, Matt. 11, 24.

THE RESCUE OF LOT. — V. 12. **And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place;** v. 13. **for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.** In their capacity of protecting servants to the children of God, the angels now bid Lot bring any relatives that he may have in the city out as quickly as possible, in case there should be a son-in-law, and then any sons and daughters. This order they substantiate with a definite reference to the destruction of the city which they had been given charge of. V. 14. **And Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.** The two daughters of Lot were still living in his house, but they were engaged to be married, their husbands-to-be being designated as Lot's sons-in-law, since before the Lord

a valid betrothal is equal to a marriage, so far as its obligation is concerned. Lot urged these two men to flee out of the city, since the Lord was about to destroy it. **But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.** They laughed at him for his foolish fears, since they, in their fleshly security, did not believe that the judgment of God was near. Cp. Luke 17, 28. 29. V. 15. **And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.** The new day dawned, and Lot was still busy with his affairs or felt loath to leave the associations of the city where he had his wealth. But the angels urged him to arouse himself and to lead forth the relatives who were present with him in the house, as there was no time to lose. Lot showed the weakness of the flesh which finds its delight in the things of this world. V. 16. **And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand and upon the hand of his wife and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.** Lot was preserved in the general destruction almost by force, since the angels, by virtue of the fact that God intended to spare him in mercy, took hold of him, of his wife, and of his two daughters and drew them out of the city. V. 17. **And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that He said, Escape for thy life. Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.** The angels, having attended to their duty of bringing the fugitives forth out of the city, left them for other work, and the Lord took charge of their flight by bidding them escape to the mountains in the east, later those of Moab. Leave the valley, look straight ahead of you, hide in the mountains, — those were the orders of the Lord. V. 18. **And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord!** V. 19. **Behold now, Thy servant hath found grace in Thy sight, and Thou hast magnified Thy mercy which Thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me and I die.** V. 20. **Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one; oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.** Whether the Lord had again joined the angels after Lot had left Sodom, or whether Lot spoke these words to the angels as Jehovah's representatives before they turned back to their gruesome work, is immaterial. But his prayer shows that fear, confusion, terror had reduced him to a state of gibbering helplessness, which caused him to appeal to the grace and mercy of the Lord in permitting him to flee into the little town of Bela. Lot's argument was that the city was so very small; surely, to save it from destruction would make little difference. V. 21. **And He said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city for the which thou hast spoken.** V. 22. **Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.** Thus did the Lord have compassion on Lot's weakness and magnify His grace upon him, even to the extent of delaying the entire judgment of destruction until Lot reached the haven of Zoar (little). Thus the believers are often full of doubt and timidity when they are placed before the necessity of renouncing everything that this world offers. But God bears patiently with their weakness and helps them in spite of themselves.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN. — V. 23. **The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.** Whether it was mere weariness after a night without rest, or whether the unexampled terror of the impending destruction prevented Lot's hurrying, — at any rate, the sun had already risen over the earth when Lot reached Zoar, the city of refuge. V. 24. **Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.** The Lord, that is, the Son of God on earth, who had charge of this sentence of wrath, caused fire and brimstone to rain upon the doomed cities from the Lord out of heaven. This is no poetic description of a severe electrical storm, but the narrative of an actual event, of a cataclysm brought upon the sinful cities by a special act of God's avenging justice. V. 25. **And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.** It was a total destruction of the people with their cities and all their property, 2 Pet. 2, 6. 7. And not only were all things above the ground consumed, together with all vegetation, but the very ground, which contained many asphalt pits and naphtha deposits, was burned out. It seems also that the Sea of the Plain sank together with the surrounding country, forming, with its extension, what is now known as the Dead Sea. To this day that entire country is a picture of utter desolation, with hardly a trace of animal or vegetable life. Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, are an example of warning to the godless of all times. If they will not heed the Lord's call to repentance, they will find themselves engulfed on the last day in a cataclysm which will be a thousandfold greater than that of the vale of Siddim, casting them into everlasting destruction. V. 26. **But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.** In the case of Lot's wife female curiosity and the longing for her home in Sodom caused her to lag behind him and finally to look back. This was

against the plain command of the Lord, and so His punishment was immediate: she became, she was turned into, a pillar of salt. Cp. Luke 17, 31. 32. He that has escaped the dangers of this world should not permit himself to be turned back to its vanity. V. 27. **And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord.** His anxiety concerning the fate of Lot and of the five cities would not permit him to rest, so he hurried to the place where he had interceded with the Lord on the day before, whence one had a distant view of the former beautiful valley. V. 28. **And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.** He had the evidence of his eyes that the Lord had not even found ten righteous people in the cities. V. 29. **And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.** So it was due not only to his own righteousness, but especially to the intercessory prayer of Abraham that Lot was saved in the midst of the utter destruction which consumed the cities of the valley where he had made his home. Christians must never grow weary in sending their supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks to the Throne of Mercy, 1 Tim. 2, 1.

The Sin of Lot and His Daughters.—V. 30. **And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar; and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.** The terrible catastrophe had completely unnerved Lot, causing him to doubt even the plain promise of the Lord to preserve the city of Zoar for his sake. As soon as possible he left the city and made his home in a cave of the mountains, very likely in what was afterward known as the country of Moab. V. 31. **And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth;** v. 32. **come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.** Even if it was not lewd voluptuousness which caused the two daughters of Lot deliberately to plan this sin of incest, it shows that they had imbibed freely of the poison of Sodom and were acquainted with the most unnatural vices. The desire for children and for the propagation of their family cannot excuse their revolting act, even if their supposition of the general destruction of men had been true. V. 33. **And they made their father drink wine that night; and the first-born went in and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down nor when she arose.** Lot was in such a drunken stupor that he was not fully conscious of his actions. V. 34. **And it came to pass on the morrow that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father; let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.** V. 35. **And they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down nor when she arose.** V. 36. **Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.** Lot was guilty as well as his daughters, first, because he gave way to dull despair instead of trusting in the Lord, and then also, because he did not watch and pray, but permitted his daughters to make him drunk. V. 37. **And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab** (from father); **the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.** V. 38. **And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi** (son of my generation, begotten of my father); **the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.** Thus Moses recorded the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites, which had become mighty nations in his day. Both nations subsequently played an important rôle in the history of Israel, Deut. 2, 9. 19; 23, 4. 5. We hear no more of Lot, since he was no longer of any influence in the history of the chosen people. And still he is mentioned in the New Testament as a type of a just man, 2 Pet. 2, 7. 8, whom Christians, in his righteous acts, may well imitate.

CHAPTER 20.

Abraham at Gerar.

Sarah Again in Danger.—V. 1. **And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.** From the grove of Mamre at or near Hebron Abraham gradually journeyed, with all his possessions, to the extreme southern part of Canaan, very likely in search of better pasturage. The region where he tented was, roughly speaking, between Kadesh and Shur, and in his wanderings he encamped also at Gerar, in the land of the Philistines. V. 2. **And Abraham said of Sarah, his wife, She is my sister; and Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah.** As in Egypt, chap. 12, 13, Abraham did not tell the exact and complete truth when he stated that Sarah was his sister. So the king of Gerar, whose standing title was Abimelech, acted in good faith when he added her to his

harem. Either the transformation worked in Sarah as a result of God's promise had renewed her youth, or Abimelech found it to his advantage to be related to the rich Abraham by marriage. V. 3. **But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.** God prevents the greater sin which might have happened as a result of Abraham's weakness. Appearing to Abimelech in a dream by night, a form of communication which He often adopted, the Lord told him: Behold, thou art destined to die. Sarah was not free to be married; she was literally under her husband as the head of the household; she was a married woman. V. 4. **But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, Lord, wilt Thou slay also a righteous nation?** V. 5. **Said he not unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself, said, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.** It is not only the transgression in deed which makes a person guilty in the sight of God, but even an intention that may result in evil without the knowledge of the person. The majority of the sins of Christians are committed in ignorance. In Abimelech's case, where the Sixth Commandment had not yet been broken in deed, he defends himself by referring to the plain statements of Abraham and Sarah, on the basis of which he had acted in good faith. Surely the Lord would not slay a people in spite of its righteousness, since he had acted in the guilelessness of his heart and in the purity of his hands; he had not knowingly polluted either his heart or his hands. V. 6. **And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.** The Lord accepted the excuse of Abimelech, incidentally telling him, however, that the sickness which had prevented the king from consummating the supposed marriage had been inflicted from above, to prevent a greater wrong from being committed. Thus the Lord makes use even of misery and tribulation to keep His children from sin and transgression. V. 7. **Now, therefore, restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; and if thou restore her not, know that thou shalt surely die, thou and all that are thine.** If, after this revelation, Abimelech had persisted in keeping Sarah, his sin would have been one of malice, and death would have been the certain retribution, not only his own death, but that of his whole family. By telling Abimelech that he would remain alive only by virtue of the intercession of Abraham, who was one of His own prophets, the Lord showed that He knew the king to be capable of true moral understanding. It is a wise person that permits himself to be governed by God's directions after some stumble or mistake.

ABIMELECH REPROVES ABRAHAM. — V. 8. **Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men were sore afraid.** The sincerity of Abimelech is shown by the fact that he lost no time in righting the unconscious wrong which he had committed. At the very earliest opportunity he informed his servants of the true state of affairs, to whom the effect of his own reverent fear was communicated. V. 9. **Then Abimelech called Abraham and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.** Abimelech's open stand in this matter, particularly in inquiring of Abraham the reason and the object of his behavior, was well taken, for the king had acted in good faith, a fact that cannot be alleged on Abraham's side. V. 10. **And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou that thou hast done this thing?** He wanted to know what Abraham had had before his eyes, what object he had had in acting as he did. V. 11. **And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.** V. 12. **And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.** V. 13. **And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me: at every place whither we shall come say of me, He is my brother.** This was an explanation, an attempted defense, but a questionable excuse at best, that he had not supposed that men feared God in the land of Abimelech, that consequently he feared for his life on account of Sarah, that he had made an agreement with his wife to have her masquerade as his sister. The Lord could very well have protected him and his wife without such questionable means. The Bible does not hide from us the weaknesses and foibles of the saints, but frankly tells them for our warning. If we are honestly engaged in the work of our calling, we need not resort to subterfuges to save our lives. Without the will of God not a hair of our heads may be touched.

THE PLAGUE REMOVED FROM ABIMELECH. — V. 14. **And Abimelech took sheep and oxen and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah, his wife.** The restoration of Sarah with her honor unspotted followed as a matter of course, but the giving of

presents in such rich measure was an act of magnanimity on Abimelech's part, showing that he felt no false resentment. V. 15. **And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee; dwell where it pleaseth thee.** To offer to Abraham the choice of pasturage in his land in the circumstances was certainly heaping coals of fire on his head. V. 16. **But unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee and with all other. Thus she was reproved.** The goods which Abimelech had given to Abraham were estimated at this sum. Now Sarah was to know that this (or he) was to her a covering of the eyes and to her entire household and to all men; that is, according to some explanations, she was to look upon the gifts as presents of atonement, also with respect to such people in whose eyes she might be covered with dishonor. Or, if the reference is to Abraham, it means that he had wilfully blinded the eyes of Abimelech and all his people in this transaction, and that Sarah should now be reminded, through this present, never again to agree to such a subterfuge. In that way she stood reproved. V. 17. **So Abraham prayed unto God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maid-servants; and they bare children.** V. 18. **For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** That was the manner in which God's punishment upon Abimelech had begun, by denying offspring to his entire household, for it is in His hands, as the Creator of the universe, to grant the blessing of children. The entire story shows that the Lord holds His protecting hand over His children in the midst of all the temptations of the world, Ps. 105, 14. 15.

CHAPTER 21.

The Birth of Isaac and the Casting Forth of Ishmael.

Isaac Born, Circumcised, and Weaned. — V. 1. **And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken.** The Lord visited Sarah by doing to her as He had promised, by granting her what she had desired for so many years, a child of her own. Children are a gift of the goodness of God. V. 2. **For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him.** God's promise was literally fulfilled, for at just the time that He had named at His last visit the son of promise was born, a stranger in truth, for Abraham was still sojourning in the land of the Philistines. The birth of Isaac was an act of faith on the part of Sarah, who with all her human infirmities was a true child of the Lord, Heb. 11, 11. V. 3. **And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.** The emphasis is again upon the fact that this was the son of promise, that he was the son of Abraham, not by a servant, but by Sarah, his wife. He complied with God's command in giving his son the name Isaac (he that laughs), chap. 17, 19. 17. As the joyous laughter of Abraham had been caused by the great contrast between the idea and the reality, so the birth was a miracle of God's mercy, whence the son should always be an object of joyful and grateful contemplation. V. 4. **And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him.** Chap. 17, 11. 12. V. 5. **And Abraham was an hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him.** V. 6. **And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.** V. 7. **And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should have given children suck? For I have born him a son in his old age.** It was an occasion of great rejoicing; for Sarah, with reference to the name which the Lord had selected for the child, cried out: "Laughter God has prepared for me; all that hear it will rejoice with me," full of astonishment at the miraculously given child. Who would ever have thought or dared to express the idea that she should yet have a child of her own to cuddle and to nurse? V. 8. **And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.** So Abraham shared the grateful joy of his wife, making the occasion of his son's weaning a great festival, with the customary feast. This happened when Isaac was about three years old. This story reminds us of the greater miracle of the birth of Jesus, who also, but in a far more wonderful manner, was born contrary to the course of nature. Isaac, too, is a type of the believers of all time. For just as he was born by virtue of the divine promise, so we are spiritual children of the promise, Rom. 9, 8; Gal. 4, 28; 1 Pet. 1, 23.

Hagar and Ishmael Cast Forth. — V. 9. **And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.** It was a jeering laughter, a sneer, which Ishmael affected, perhaps as early as the festival of weaning. Unbelief, jealousy, and pride were aroused in Ishmael by the fact that Isaac was plainly the heir of the household. The mimicking, mocking, ridi-

culing on the part of Ishmael against Isaac could not long remain hidden from Sarah. V. 10. **Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.** This was not a matter of petty jealousy, but was spoken in agreement with the promise of the Lord. Till now Hagar had been suffered in the house of Abraham, but Sarah's demand was that the slave be driven forth, that Abraham renounce all connection with her and her son. V 11. **And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.** His personal affection for his own flesh and blood, and the fact that God had given him special promises concerning Ishmael, chap. 17, 18. 20, caused him to hesitate about taking such a step. V. 12. **And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.** It was God who decided the matter, and in Sarah's favor. Abraham was to set aside personal feelings and considerations, both as to Ishmael and as to Hagar, and heed the voice of his wife. For Isaac was to be the bearer of the Messianic promise; through his lineage the blessing of the Lord was to come upon the nations, in the person of the Messiah. Cp. Rom. 9, 7. 8; Heb. 11, 18. The words of Sarah have a special spiritual meaning, as St. Paul shows, Gal. 4, 29: "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Those that are spiritual-minded, the children of God, are derided and persecuted by the carnal-minded, by the children of the world. The will of the Lord is that His children should separate themselves in all spiritual matters from the children of the world, and avoid all the pitfalls which are placed for the unwary feet of such as seek the friendship of His enemies. V. 13. **And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation because he is thy seed.** For Abraham's sake even the slave's son should receive a large share of this world's blessings. V. 14. **And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder and the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.** Abraham, as usual, lost no time in performing his duty, unpleasant as it was. Early the next morning he gave Hagar a supply of bread and a skin filled with water, and thereupon called Ishmael, then a lad of almost seventeen years. When these two had been dismissed, they wandered forth toward the southwest, probably with the intention of reaching the main caravan route toward Egypt. Thus the separation, which had to come sooner or later, had been effected.

ISHMAEL'S LIFE SAVED. — V. 15. **And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.** Apparently Hagar lost her way, or some miscalculation interfered, for the water in the skin was exhausted before she reached a spring. The ensuing suffering soon became so great that the boy was unable to support himself. For a while his mother supported him, drawing him along and half carrying him, in the hope of finding water. But at last she was obliged to let him sink down, her mother-love, however, selecting a shady place under a bush. V. 16. **And she went and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice and wept.** Here are further traits of a mother's undying love. She would not abandon the lad entirely, even if she might have gotten help; she could not bear to see him suffer and probably die before her eyes of thirst. So she sat down at a distance equal to that usually taken by bowmen shooting at a target, and wept out loud in full abandonment to her grief. V. 17. **And God heard the voice of the lad; and the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.** V. 18. **Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.** In this great extremity Ishmael forgot all his mocking and turned to the prayers which he had learned in his father's house. In answer to this prayer the Angel of God in the specific sense, the Son of God, who had appeared to her once before, chap. 16, 9. 13, bade her not to fear, but to arise, to lift up her son, and to support him, since he was not to die, but to live, and to become the ancestor of a great people. V. 19. **And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.** Help had been so near at hand, but Hagar, in her own exhausted condition, had not noticed the spring which welled forth at a small distance. Now she filled the skin which she carried and refreshed her son, thus saving his life. V. 20. **And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.** V. 21. **And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.** Ishmael grew up as a true son of the desert, living in the great wilderness which extends on the southern boundary of Canaan from Egypt to Arabia. The blessing of God rested upon him. He became very skilful with the bow and married an Egyptian woman whom his mother selected for him. This fact, unfortunately, strengthened the heathen element in the Ishmaelites and probably caused their

abandoning of the true God in a very short time.

The Covenant between Abraham and Abimelech. — V. 22. **And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest;** v. 23. **now, therefore, swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son, but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee thou shalt do unto me and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.** Abraham was still living in the land of the Philistines, and the latter were unable to deny that a special blessing of God rested upon Abraham. This fact finally prompted Abimelech to propose a covenant between himself and Abraham, in order to secure the friendship of this man for himself and his children. The chief condition was that there was to be no false or double dealing, and Abimelech reminds Abraham of the fact that he had shown merciful kindness to him at the time when he lived in Gerar, chap. 20, 15. His appeal was to Abraham's generosity, gratitude, and faithfulness. V. 24. **And Abraham said, I will swear.** He was ready to make such a covenant; he had no hopes for the personal possession of Canaan. But before he subscribes to any further promises, he distinguishes between political and private rights. V. 25. **And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.** That was a grievance which required adjustment before any pact could be made. V. 26. **And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing, neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but to-day.** This explanation, accompanied, as it was, with the order to return the well to its rightful owner, was satisfactory; it showed the fairness of Abimelech in all his doing. V. 27. **And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.** The presents were the token of the covenant on the part of Abraham which was now formally entered upon by both. V. 28. **And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.** V. 29. **And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?** V. 30. **And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me that I have digged this well.** This was a special transaction with reference to the well which the servants of Abimelech had taken from Abraham. Abimelech's surprised question as to the meaning of this action received the answer that the king was to take them from the hand of Abraham for a witness to the latter that he had caused this well to be dug. Not to redeem the well, therefore, but to secure his property against any possible claims in the future Abraham set the seven ewe lambs aside. V. 31. **Wherefore he called that place Beersheba, because there they sware both of them.** With an oath they confirmed their covenant, and therefore the place of their meeting was ever afterward known as Beersheba, "the well of the oath." It is about twenty-five miles from Hebron, on the road to Egypt, where there are two wells to this day. V. 32. **Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech rose up and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines,** that is, to Philistia proper, which was along the Mediterranean Sea. V. 33. **And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.** V. 34. **And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.** As he had done in other places, chap. 12, 8; 13, 18, so Abraham did here. Having planted a tamarisk, a tree which grew to a remarkable height and furnished a wide shade, he proclaimed there the name of the eternal God, chiefly to his own household, but also to others that might come along this way. This he continued as long as he lived this nomadic life in the territory of the Philistines, for they considered this section a part of the country under their control. That is the chief work of the believers on earth, to praise the name, the mercy, the faithfulness of God and to proclaim His Word. Thus they do what they can to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth.

CHAPTER 22.

The Sacrifice of Isaac.

The Journey to Moriah. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am.** After these happenings at Beersheba God tempted, or tested, Abraham, not by giving him an occasion to sin, Jas. 1, 13, but by trying his faith as to its soundness and strength. Upon the Lord's calling to him, probably in a dream-vision, Abraham promptly signifies his eagerness to hear. V. 2. **And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.** The Lord makes His proposal with deliberate, detailed emphasis. Abraham was to take his son, not Ishmael, but his only son, the darling of his old age, the one

whom he loved dearly, namely, Isaac. Him he was to offer up as a sacrifice in the land of Moriah, the mountain range in the neighborhood of what was afterward Jerusalem, on one of the mountains which the Lord would indicate to him. V. 3. **And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac, his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him.** There is not a word about excitement or turmoil in the heart of Abraham. Quietly and deliberately he made his preparations for a literal fulfilment of God's command, girding the beast that was to bear the wood for the sacrifice and the food for the trip, ordering two of his young men, probably house-slaves, to accompany him, even splitting the wood which he would need for the sacrifice, and then setting out for Moriah. He did not consult with flesh and blood, for his faith was active in obedience. V. 4. **Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.** The distance from Beersheba to Jerusalem was forty-five to fifty miles and therefore required about two and one-half days of steady traveling. V. 5. **And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.** Although the servants of Abraham were devoted to him, they were hardly prepared to witness the scene which would be enacted on the mountain that lay before them. In spite of the fact that the outcome of his act of worship was hidden from Abraham, his faith clung to the promise of the Lord, accounting that God was able to raise up Isaac, even from the dead, Heb. 11, 17—19. For that reason he confidently says: We shall return to you. True faith trusts in God even when He seems harsh and angry, when the believer feels only His displeasure in his heart; for it is an easy matter for God to replace everything that He sees fit to take away, to bring back even that which was lost. V. 6. **And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac, his son; and he took the fire in his hand and a knife; and they went both of them together.** Abraham personally carried the knife for the slaughter and the fire, a glimmering coal or a bit of tinder wood in a kettle, while he laid the wood on Isaac, who thus became the type of the immeasurably greater sacrifice, Jesus Christ, who likewise bore the wood of His cross willingly and patiently and bore our sins in His body on the cross. V. 7. **And Isaac spake unto Abraham, his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?** Isaac broke the oppressive silence with a question of childish curiosity. He had noted that everything else had been provided, but the absence of a sheep, a lamb, or a kid which was to serve for the sacrifice caused him to ask. Naturally, the innocent question must have increased the distress of Abraham considerably; but with unwavering steadfastness he walked on. V. 8. **And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together.** It was not Abraham's intention, as Luther remarks, to torture his son with the details of the divine command; and the quiet answer of his father satisfied Isaac.

THE INTERFERENCE OF GOD.—V. 9. **And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.** The detailed narrative again calls attention to the strict obedience of Abraham: the building of the altar, the laying in order of the proper amount of wood for consuming the offering, the binding of Isaac, who is here again designated as his son, and the placing of him on the altar. V. 10. **And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.** This is the climax, the most dramatic moment of the story: Isaac as a patient sacrifice, knowing himself to be the burnt offering which the Lord had provided, and the father ready to slaughter his son. V. 11. **And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham! And he said, Here am I.** V. 12. **And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.** The Angel of the Lord in the special sense of the word, the Son of God, is here again in evidence, interfering just in time to save the life of Isaac. God had now, by the most severe test which could have been devised, obtained evidence, made manifest by evident proof, discovered by actual experiment, that fearing God Abraham was, that this was the attitude of his mind and heart, since he had not spared even his only son for the sake of his obedience to God. Here also the type of Isaac as foreshadowing the greater sacrifice of the New Testament is emphasized, Rom. 8, 32. V. 13. **And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.** God here directed the attention of Abraham to the ram in the background, overlooked by him till now, caught in the thicket on the mountainside with his long, crooked horns. Acting upon the suggestion, he made the ram the sacrificial animal in the stead of his son Isaac, the ram thus, as in many

of the later sacrifices, being the symbolical representation, taking the place of him who was destined to die. That fact also gave the great value to the sacrifice of Christ, for it was made for us, in our stead. V. 14. **And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh, as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.** As Abraham applied to the place of his sacrifice a name which means "the Lord will see or provide," 5) so men afterward had a proverbial saying based upon this happening, "on the hill where Jehovah is manifested, or revealed," from which the name Moriah originated.

The Blessing of the Lord Repeated. — V. 15. **And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,** v. 16. **and said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son,** v. 17. **that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;** v. 18. **and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.** A solemn declaration and prophecy, supported by the strongest oath which the Lord may swear, by Himself. The extent of the promise, which points forward to a numberless progeny, to the complete overthrow of all enemies, and especially to the fact that in his Seed, in the one great Seed of the woman, all nations of the earth should be blessed, precludes the understanding of a mere temporal blessing. It is chiefly to this blessing that St. Paul refers when he writes: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy Seed,' which is Christ," Gal. 3, 16. In Christ all nations of the earth are blessed; in His power the people of God, the spiritual descendants of Abraham, conquer all their enemies. That is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. V. 19. **So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.** Abraham's faith had been fully vindicated; his trust had been rewarded in a most wonderful manner. He now, with Isaac, returned to the place where his servants were waiting for him, and together they journeyed back to Beersheba.

The Family of Nahor. — V. 20. **And it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor:** v. 21. **Huz, his first-born, and Buz, his brother, and Kemuel, the father of Aram,** v. 22. **and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.** V. 23. **And Bethuel begat Rebekah; these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.** V. 24. **And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.** Of these children of Nahor, Buz is mentioned Jer. 25, 23 and Job 32, 2, and Maachah Deut. 3, 14; Josh. 12, 5. The others may, in part, have been fathers of tribes later found in Southern Mesopotamia and Northern Arabia, the country where Job and his children afterward lived. But the chief interest of the list is in the fact that it shows the lineage of Rebekah, who was a legal granddaughter of Nahor and the daughter of Isaac's cousin.

5) *Yahweh Yireh* seems to be the equivalent of the Babylonian Bel-En-Urta, as it is called in the Amarna letters. (*Amer. Journal of Archeology*, Vol. XXVI, 1922, 97.)

CHAPTER 23.

Sarah's Death and Burial.

The Death of Sarah. — V. 1. **And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old; these were the years of the life of Sarah.** She thus lived to a ripe old age and saw her son Isaac grow up to full manhood, for the latter was now thirty-seven years old. Meanwhile Abraham had moved back to Hebron. V. 2. **And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.** It appears from Josh. 14, 15 and Judg. 1, 10 that Hebron, one of the very oldest settlements in Canaan, for a while bore the name of its conqueror, Arba of the Anakims, but the original name was restored by the children of Israel. Here Sarah died. And Abraham came, that is, he went about, he made preparations for the customary period of mourning, the lament for the dead.

Abraham Negotiates for a Burial-Place. V. 3. **And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,** v. 4. **I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying-place with you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.** That Abraham observed the usual period of mourning did not in any way conflict with his faith. Sarah had been his wife, a believer in the true God, in spite of all her weaknesses, the mother of all believing women. He had loved her dearly, as a faithful husband should, and she was his even in death. He now left the tent where Sarah lay in state, and appeared in the gate

of the city, the customary assembling-place of the people, where all business was commonly transacted. The children of Heth, the Hittites, were living there, for Hebron was located in Hittite country, although not far from that of the Amorites on the west. As a stranger and a nomad in their midst he now negotiated for a burial-place, first of all for Sarah, his wife. V. 5. **And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,** v. 6. **Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us: In the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulcher, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.** The narrative presents a beautiful scene of politeness, simplicity, kindness, frankness, humility, modesty, not unmingled with some shades of avarice, as one commentator remarks. Abraham had come to purchase a piece of ground, but with true Oriental ceremoniousness the men of the city drew out the negotiations, paying Abraham the compliment that they considered him a prince of God in their midst, and that he had but to pick out any burial-place which might suit his fancy, and they would feel honored in having him accept it as a gift. V. 7. **And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth.** This ceremonial, rising and bowing, on the part of Abraham signified that he deeply appreciated their compliments and their kindness in making such a liberal offer. V. 8. **And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar,** v. 9. **that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burying-place amongst you.** Abraham continued to conduct his business with all circumspection and politeness, begging the men present to intercede for him with Ephron, a man of some importance in the community, if that was in agreement with their ideas. For this Ephron was the owner of a piece of ground which contained a cave known as Machpelah, which Abraham thought would suit his purposes very well. For full silver he wanted to buy it, that is, he wanted to pay what the land was worth, since he intended to use it for a perpetual place of burial for his family. Believers will always do well if they do not place themselves under obligations to unbelievers, since the result may often react upon their Christianity.

THE PURCHASE OF MACHPELAH. — V. 10. **And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron, the Hittite, answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,** v. 11. **Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee; bury thy dead.** The same Oriental politeness continued to be exercised throughout. The offer of Ephron, the Hittite, made before the ears of all the members of his tribe and of all his fellow-citizens, was hardly intended seriously; for if Abraham had accepted his offer, he would, according to custom, have expected a very rich counter-present, and, in case Abraham chose to purchase the land, Ephron's offer was designed to prevent any abatement of the price he had fixed in his mind. V. 12. **And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.** He once more gratefully acknowledged the kind intention of the Hittites, also in this offer as made by Ephron; he was not to be outdone in politeness. V. 13. **And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.** The words of Abraham at this point indicate some measure of agitation and a shade of impatience: But if thou — Oh, that thou wouldest listen to me! As he had indicated from the start, he did not want the cave as a gift, but had come prepared to pay for it. V. 14. **And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,** v. 15. **My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy dead.** Ephron here named his price: "The field — four hundred shekels silver; between me and thee, what is that?" It is named in courtly terms and intimates an apology for the demand, since Abraham would insist upon having it thus. The silver shekel being worth about 50 cents, the piece of land with the cave Machpelah cost Abraham two hundred dollars. "A piece of land of so little value could not be the matter of a long transaction between two rich men." V. 16. **And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.** There were no stamped coins with a fixed value in Canaan at that time, but there seem to have been pieces of silver of a definite weight, which could readily be weighed out. In a transaction such as that recorded here, these pieces were weighed out in order to show that no fraud was being attempted. Abraham weighed out full measure, as it was required with the merchants, in honest business. Christians, as the apostle rightly says, will avoid even the appearance of evil. Abraham here gave evidence of his faith by buying a small piece of land in the country which was promised to his descendants, being sure that the Lord would keep His promise.

THE BURIAL OF SARAH. — V. 17. **And the**

field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure v. 18. **unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.** The language is that of a formal instrument used in the transfer of real estate; the location of the field is given: before Mamre, over against the grove of Mamre, adjoining the cave Machpelah, which was at one end of it; the description of the property is accurate and includes even the trees on the plot itself and on its borders on every side. The field was thus conveyed to Abraham with all the appurtenances thereof, the record of the transaction being very minute and the witnesses expressly mentioned. V. 19. **And after this Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre; the same is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.** That was the object of the purchase of this field with its cave, which from its name may have had two entrances or been a double cavern. V. 20. **And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the sons of Heth.** By burying his wife in Canaan, in the Land of Promise, Abraham confessed that Sarah took part in the promised blessing, that her body was buried in the sure hope of the future resurrection by virtue of the redemption of Christ. In that sense the cemeteries of Christian congregations are truly God's acres, from which He will, on the last day, gather the harvest of rich fruit.

CHAPTER 24.

Eliezer's Journey to Mesopotamia.

The Preparation for the Journey. — V. 1. **And Abraham was old and well stricken in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.** He was now one hundred and forty years old, and felt the coming on of the infirmities of old age. It was necessary for him to provide for Isaac's marriage before death should overtake him; moreover, the Messianic promise was to be preserved to his family through Isaac and his descendants. In all things the Lord had blessed Abraham, pouring out upon him both temporal and spiritual blessings. V. 2. **And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had,** the senior servant in charge of his entire establishment, **Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh,** as that member of the body which symbolized posterity, in this case the promised seed, the promise and the hope of Abraham and Israel. V. 3. **And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell;** v. 4. **but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.** Abraham demanded a solemn oath from Eliezer, in order that this most important mission would be carried out, even if he himself should die soon. By Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, he had his servant swear, for this was not an ordinary marriage which was contemplated, but a matter of the greatest importance for the kingdom of God, since Isaac was the heir of the divine promise. For that reason also a heathen woman from among the daughters of the Canaanites would not have been acceptable, just as to-day the marriage of a Christian with an enemy of Christ is always ill-advised, to say the least. V. 5. **And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land; must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?** The caution of Eliezer in not swearing lightly is to be commended highly, although he did not have the same measure of faith as Abraham, who trusted implicitly in the promise of the Lord. V. 6. **And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again!** That would have been a step backward and would have shown mistrust in the words of the Lord. V. 7. **The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land, He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.** That was the argument of faith: Jehovah had brought Abraham into the land in which he was now sojourning as a stranger; Jehovah had, with a solemn oath, promised this land to his descendants; therefore Jehovah would crown the servant's venture in Abraham's name with success, through the guidance and protection of His angel. V. 8. **And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again.** This was for the sake of reassuring the timid servant. If believers, in the name of God, undertake a matter which pleases God, then they may and should trust in the assistance and blessing of the Lord. V. 9. **And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.** Eliezer now knew that he would not be held responsible in case the woman selected

by him would refuse to come, and so he no longer hesitated about rendering his oath in this important matter.

THE ARRIVAL AT HARAN AND THE PRAYER AT THE WELL. — V. 10. **And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.** As Abraham's chief steward, Eliezer had charge of all his master's goods; therefore, in order to represent him worthily, he not only started out with a caravan of some size, but he also took along various valuables in the form of costly presents for the possible bride and her parents, which he could back up with his power of attorney extending over all the goods of his master. So he traveled to Mesopotamia, usually stated to have been the country between the Euphrates and the Tigris, but including, in this connection, all the land from the Khabour, an eastern branch of the Euphrates, and the Orontes, in Syria. Haran, as nearly as can be determined, was situated in the headwaters of the Khabour. V. 11. **And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.** Eliezer had made his plans with care. Instead of entering the city and looking for the house of his master's relatives, he caused his camels to kneel down for a temporary rest. For it was now evening, the time at which the women that draw water go forth. That was and is the special work of the women of the Orient, to fetch water for the household from the well near the village or city. Eliézer knew that there would be an opportunity for observation and for the study of character here which would reveal more than days of polite intercourse. V. 12. **And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.** The prayer is directed to Jehovah in the name of Abraham, because Eliezer was acting as the representative of his master. V. 13. **Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water;** v. 14. **and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also, let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast showed kindness unto my master.** It was a simple, childlike prayer which Eliezer addressed to the Lord. He asked that success might come to meet him, that the Lord would send good speed to his plan in pointing out to him that young woman whom He had destined to be the wife of Isaac. The plan of Eliezer aimed to test out especially the humility, the unselfishness, and the willingness to serve in the girls of the city. Note: In a proper marriage it is God who selects the husband and the wife for each other, and this is an act of His kindness. If the blessing and the guidance of the Lord were implored with greater frequency and with greater importunity in the important matter of marriage, there would be fewer unhappy households in the world.

THE MEETING WITH REBEKAH. — V. 15. **And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.** All the emphasis is here laid upon the speed with which the Lord heard the prayer of Eliezer. He had not yet finished his prayer when Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, the grandniece of Abraham, appeared. V. 16. **And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.** Rebekah did not let beauty spoil her, nor did the fact that she was a rich man's daughter cause her to despise manual labor. She personally descended the steps to the well, filled her pitcher with water, and then returned to the head of the path. V. 17. **And the servant ran to meet her and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.** V. 18. **And she said, Drink, my lord. And she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.** V. 19. **And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also until they have done drinking.** V. 20. **And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.** This willingness to serve, which did not even balk at the prospect of drawing water for ten camels at the end of a day's journey, came in literal fulfilment of Eliezer's prayer. Rebekah's every act gave evidence of a hospitable kindness which considered the ready serving of a stranger a privilege. This miraculous arrangement of the circumstances was due to the dispensation of God. Many believers have since had the same experience, namely, that the living God hears prayers, often before they themselves have finished imploring Him for help. V. 21. **And the man wondering at her, watching her carefully and almost taken aback at the exactness with which his prayer was fulfilled before his eyes, held his peace to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.** In silence the servant deliberated over the happening, asking himself whether this young woman belonged to the family of his master, whether she was still single, whether she would be willing to go with him, in short, whether the Lord had caused his way to prosper, had given success to his journey. V. 22. **And it**

came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold. As a token of his gratitude for her willingness to serve Eliezer the latter took from his presents which he had brought a golden nose-ring, such as the woman of the Orient wears suspended from the middle wall of her nose, and two bracelets of gold, worn upon the wrist, each of five shekels weight (a shekel being about ten drams avoirdupois). V. 23. **And said, Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?** The presents which Rebekah received at the hand of Eliezer were intended also to make her all the more willing to answer his questions as to her family and as to the possibility of obtaining lodging in her father's house. V. 24. **And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.** Thus was Eliezer's first question answered and the fulfilment of his prayer emphasized. V. 25. **She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.** The second question was thus answered with becoming reservation, for she, as the daughter of the house, could not issue a direct invitation. She merely stated, therefore, that she knew chopped straw and other food to be present at home in sufficient quantities. V. 26. **And the man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord.** V. 27. **And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of His mercy and His truth; I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.** The obvious guidance and dispensation of the Lord in this matter, in everything pertaining to his journey, so deeply affected Eliezer that he, even in the presence of Rebekah, broke forth in a prayer of thanksgiving which revealed, to some extent, whence he came. The Lord had not withheld His free grace, His faithfulness, mercy, and truth from Abraham. He had only started out on his way, but it was the Lord that had guided him to his destination and to the object of his journey in such a miraculous manner. V. 28. **And the damsel ran and told them of her mother's house these things.** Full of astonishment at the prayer of thanksgiving which she heard from the lips of the stranger, Rebekah ran home, naturally seeking for her mother in the women's part of the house. Throughout the chapter, Rebekah is an example of a God-fearing, pious virgin, whose womanly virtues stand out prominently, just as Eliezer presents the picture of a pious, faithful servant.

ELIEZER IN THE HOME OF BETHUEL. — V. 29. **And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban; and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.** V. 30. **And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah, his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me, that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.** Among those that heard the excited report of Rebekah was her brother Laban. A glance at the rich presents which his sister exhibited started Laban, whose later covetousness is hinted at even here, off for the well. He barely stopped long enough to hear the details of the conversation which Rebekah reported. Running out quickly from the city, he found the stranger standing beside his resting camels by the well. V. 31. **And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.** With true Oriental hospitality, even if not unmixed with some selfish motives, Laban invited Eliezer to enter, addressing him as the blessed of the Lord, one upon whom the favor of the Lord rested. V. 32. **And the man came into the house. And he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.** Eliezer accepted the invitation of Laban without delay, came to the house of Bethuel, and saw to it that the straps which held the loads of the camels were properly loosened. Laban, meanwhile, provided food and bedding for the camels and water for the customary washing of the feet before one entered the living quarters of the house. V. 33. **And there was set meat before him to eat. But he said I will not eat until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.** Oriental custom forbade any reference to the object of a man's journey until all the physical wants of the traveler had been satisfied. But Eliezer here informed his host that he could not think of eating until he literally had "said his say," until he had stated the object of his journey. His unselfish faithfulness caused him to place his own comfort after the business of his master.

ELIEZER STATES HIS ERRAND. — V. 34. **And he said, I am Abraham's servant.** After thus introducing himself, Eliezer, in a carefully set speech, announces the object of his coming. V. 35. **And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great; and He hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses.** The apparently careless enumeration serves to enhance the impression of great wealth and power. V. 36. **And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old, after the signs of advancing age were in evidence; and unto him hath he given all that he hath.** Isaac was the heir of all this great wealth. V. 37. **And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a**

wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell, v. 38. **but thou shalt go unto my father's house and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son.** V. 39. **And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.** V. 40. **And he said unto me, The Lord before whom I walk,** in the fear of whom he had arranged and led his entire life, **will send His angel with thee and prosper thy way,** give success to thy undertaking; **and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred and of my father's house.** V. 41. **Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.** V. 42. **And I came this day unto the well and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now Thou do prosper my way which I go,** if Thou wilt indeed give success to my undertaking; v. 43. **behold, I stand by the well of water, and it shall come to pass that, when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink,** v. 44. **and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels, let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son.** Even in this part of his speech, by referring to the virgin, in the singular, whom he was expecting to come to the well, the servant directs the attention of his hearers to Rebekah. V. 45. **And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well and drew water; and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.** V. 46. **And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also. So I drank, and she made the camels drink also.** V. 47. **And I asked her and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him. And I put the earring** (nose-ring) **upon her face and the bracelets upon her hands.** V. 48. **And I bowed down my head, and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter** (in the wider sense, for Rebekah was Nahor's grandchild) **unto his son.** The circumstantial narrative, with the full account of the prayer, was intended to show that Jehovah had really taken the matter out of Eliezer's hands already, a fact which his hearers would surely have to acknowledge. V. 49. **And now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.** Eliezer appeals directly to the kindness and faithfulness which Abraham should surely be entitled to from his relatives. At any rate, he expected them to give him definite information as to their stand in the matter, in order that he might know exactly what course to pursue next. Mark that in a proper and valid betrothal, as Luther here points out, the suit is directed to the parents of the young woman first, and a secret engagement has no validity before God.

REBEKAH CONSENTS TO BECOME ISAAC'S BRIDE. — V. 50. **Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.** The entire matter had so evidently progressed to this point under the direct guidance of the Lord that both Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, and Laban, her brother, could not but recognize the will of Jehovah. They had nothing to say, no change to suggest, Num. 24, 13; 2 Sam. 13, 22. V. 51. **Behold, Rebekah is before thee; take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken.** So the first step toward a valid engagement had been taken: Eliezer's suit for the hand of Rebekah for his master Isaac had been made and accepted. It is the parents that give their children in marriage, Laban here being included in the natural guardians of Rebekah as the older son, to whom the father had entrusted practically the entire management of his affairs. V. 52. **And it came to pass that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth.** His first thoughts thus were of gratitude to the Lord, who had given such signal success to his journey, permitting him to accomplish its purpose on the very evening of his arrival. As we see the gracious hand of God directing the affairs of our lives for our benefit, we should make it a practise to thank the Lord for all His goodness toward us. V. 53. **And the servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.** These were the customary presents to the bride-to-be: various articles of jewelry of gold and silver and costly garments. **He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things,** the betrothal presents for the family, costly articles, which may have been purchased at a great cost from Phenician or Arabian traders. V. 54. **And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night.** Having successfully performed the work which his master had entrusted to him, Eliezer was now free to enjoy the hospitality of his hosts with his men. **And they rose up in the morning; and he said, Send me away unto my master.** The woman whom God had appointed to be the wife of Isaac was now found, but Eliezer, like a faithful servant, with whom the interests of his master always come first, was anxious to deliver the bride-to-be to Isaac and thus complete his mission. V. 55. **And her brother and her**

mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. Loving Rebekah as they did, they were anxious to have her stay for at least ten days. V. 56. **And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.** Eliezer, happy over the success of his enterprise, felt that he could not conscientiously consent to a delay, that he must return at once. V. 57. **And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.** The matter was to rest upon Rebekah's decision. V. 58. **And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.** Her simple, characteristically determined and vigorous answer included both her consent to the marriage with Isaac and her decision as to an immediate departure. Although giving into marriage is the prerogative of the parents, yet the girl should not be forced into a marriage without her consent, as Luther remarks. V. 59. **And they sent away Rebekah, their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.** Laban again being represented as the chief person acting for Bethuel and his wife, Rebekah is formally dismissed to become the bride of Isaac, to whom she was now bound by her word. V. 60. **And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.** That the number of Rebekah's descendants might be a countless host and that all her progeny might always be victorious against all their enemies, that was the sincere and loving blessing which the relatives that dismissed her with a heavy heart laid upon her. The work of Eliezer in the suit of Rebekah having begun so auspiciously, God Himself having manifestly blessed the betrothal, it was best to hurry forward to the consummation of marriage, lest evil tongues sow discord.

The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. — V. 61. **And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man; and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.** Thus the departure of Eliezer with Rebekah took place, Rebekah taking along not only her old nurse, Deborah, chap. 35, 8, but also a number of other slave-girls, her attendants. V. 62. **And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.** It appears from this note that Isaac, at least, if not his father as well, had journeyed down into the southern part of Canaan, near the well of Hagar, chap. 16, 14, probably to inspect the flocks in this part of the country. V. 63. **And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide,** for meditation, deliberation, and prayer, very likely also with regard to the very important step, his approaching marriage. **And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming,** which he probably recognized at once as those belonging to his establishment. V. 64. **And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.** She dropped or sprang down from the camel which she was riding; this action was characteristic of her energy and quick decision. It was customary for a rider to descend from the animal he was riding in meeting some distinguished person. V. 65. **For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?** These words were addressed to Eliezer after she had alighted from the camel. **And the servant had said, It is my master; therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.** She drew down the mantle-like veil which covered her head, for it was customary for the bride to appear before the bridegroom veiled. V. 66. **And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done;** he rendered a brief report of his journey and its success. V. 67. **And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.** The Lord Himself worked in the heart of Isaac the true bridal love for the woman so evidently destined to be his wife. So he took her to Hebron, to Sarah's tent, where Abraham's chief station was located. In this way the grief which had taken hold upon Isaac after the death of his mother was gradually assuaged. Thus the marriage which had begun with God was carried forward under His blessing

CHAPTER 25.

Abraham's Last Years, Death, and Burial. The Sons of Isaac.

Abraham's Second Marriage. — V. 1. **Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.** This woman was not a concubine during the lifetime of Sarah, but his wife by a second marriage, although she did not hold the status of the mother of the promised Seed, she was not included in the Messianic promise. V. 2. **And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.** V. 3. **And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.** V. 4. **And the sons of Midian: Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.** The rich blessing

of God shows that there was no stain attaching to this second marriage, but that it was entered into in sanctification and honor, for mutual care and assistance and for the procreation of children, the strength of Abraham having been retained in a remarkable manner, even to extreme old age. The children and grandchildren of Keturah, like those of Ishmael, became the forefathers of Arabian tribes, chiefly along the Ailanitic Gulf and northeast of it (Midianites), along the Red Sea, and along the Persian Gulf, most of them commercial nations. V. 5. **And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.** Isaac was the recognized legal heir, who also received the stock of the herds and the essential parts of Abraham's possessions. He was, moreover, the bearer of the Messianic blessing. V. 6. **But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac, his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.** Although neither Keturah nor even Hagar were concubines in the later sense of the term, yet, in comparison with Sarah, the mistress and mother by special divine interposition, they were of secondary rank. Their children, therefore, could not claim an equal division of the property with Isaac, the heir of the promise, whose inheritance the land of Canaan was to be. Abraham simply established Ishmael and all the sons of Keturah with enough property in small herds and flocks, together with the necessary servants, that they had their maintenance. They moved into the country toward the southeast and east, and there grew up into tribes. Among these descendants of Abraham the knowledge of the true God was found for a long time, their spiritual inheritance thus proving of greater value than the temporal gifts.

ABRAHAM'S DEATH AND BURIAL. — V. 7. **And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.** So he lived fully seventy-five years after the birth of Isaac and saw his grandsons grow up to the age of youths, v. 26. That also is a blessing of the Lord, Ps. 128, 6. V. 8. **Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.** Though Abraham did not live as long as his forefathers before him, yet he had had his fill of this world, both in length of life and in its misery and tribulation. His strength failed, he died, he was added to his people; his soul was received into heaven, to join the number of those that had died in the faith of the Messiah. Note that the Bible here plainly teaches the continued existence of the soul after death and implies a state of bliss. V. 9. **And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, which is before Mamre;** v. 10. **the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried and Sarah, his wife.** Ishmael, having been notified of the death of his father, came at once to show him the final honors by the side of Isaac. Naturally the burial-place which Abraham himself had purchased with such elaborate ceremonies from Ephron, the Hittite, was the only one that could come into consideration. There the two sons laid the weary body of their father to rest beside the body of Sarah, his wife, where their dust is awaiting the final resurrection. Such a burial, in which the tomb is regarded as a sleeping-chamber, agrees well with the Christian faith in the resurrection of the body. V. 11. **And it came to pass after the death of Abraham that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.** The welfare and prosperity of Abraham was continued in that of Isaac, who now, as once before, moved to the southern part of Canaan and made his headquarters at the well of Hagar, but retained his principal residence at Hebron, chap. 35, 27.

THE GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL. — V. 12. **Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar, the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham.** We have here the final account of Ishmael and a short summary of his family's history. V. 13. **And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael by their names, according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,** v. 14. **and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,** v. 15. **Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.** V. 16. **These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their towns and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.** As the Lord had promised Hagar, so it came to pass: twelve princes were begotten of her son Ishmael, twelve mighty sheiks of powerful tribes, the names of some of which were preserved for many centuries. Thus the descendants of Nebajoth and Kedar lived in Arabia Petraea, on the Peninsula of Sinai, and beyond, Is. 60, 7, the Kadarenes afterward extending toward the east in the direction of Babylonia, Is. 42, 11; Ps. 120, 5. The other Ishmaelitic tribes do not seem to have been so large and mighty, still there are references, also in Scripture, which place them into the great country on the east side of Jordan. Twelve princes they were in their tribes, governing and representing twelve tribes, with their permanent, walled camps, or cities, and their temporary encampments, with their fixed and movable habitations. V. 17. **And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years; and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.** Although Ishmael, the son of the slave woman, is represented in Scriptures as a type of the fleshly, the Spirit of God finally gained and

kept the ascendency in him. He also died in the faith and was added to the number of those that trusted in the Messiah and His salvation. V. 18. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria; and he died in the presence of all his brethren. That was the extent of the Ishmaelites' territory in later years, from the stream of Egypt on the southwest and Havilah in Arabia Deserta on the southeast to the Euphrates on the northeast. So Ishmael, in his descendants, fell upon, settled, took possession of, this country, in the presence of, next to his brethren, on the boundary of the Promised Land.

ISAAC'S PRAYER FOR REBEKAH. — V. 19. **And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac;** v. 20. **and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian, of Padanaram, the sister to Laban, the Syrian.** The threads of the story concerning Isaac are here gathered together in order to devote a paragraph to the founding of his family. The section of Mesopotamia from which Rebekah hailed is called the plains of Aram, which extended west of the Euphrates. V. 21. **And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife because she was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived.** It is the Lord who grants issue to married people, but the blessing of children, like all other blessings, must be prayed for. Just as Isaac had prayed for a pious wife, so he also prayed for children, and undoubtedly for pious children, just as Luther teaches in his explanation of the Fourth Petition. V. 22. **And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord.** This was after pregnancy had advanced to the point that movement was distinctly felt. Fearing that her condition would result in misfortune to herself and probably to the child of promise, Rebekah, rash in her speech and actions, and easily discouraged, cried out: If this be so, what is the object of my still being here? Why should I still be living, with this sore and strange struggle within me? Nevertheless she went to ask the Lord, probably through the ministry of Abraham. V. 23. **And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.** The answer was thus given in rhythmic parallels, the form of Hebrew poetry, stating that the older of the twins, the first-born, would be the servant of the younger. Cp. Rom. 9, 11. 12. The younger, therefore, would be the bearer and heir of the Messianic promise, the spiritual fatherhood of Abraham should be continued in him.

THE TWO SONS, ESAU AND JACOB. — V. 24. **And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.** V. 25. **And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.** So Esau was the first of the twins to be born, and, in allusion to the reddish, thick growth of hair which even then covered his body like a garment of skins, he was given the name, which means "the hairy one." Thus early his sensual, hard characteristics, his wildness, became evident. V. 26. **And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob.** The name signifies "the holder of the heel," "the cunning one," because he was supposed to have taken advantage of his brother thus early in life. **And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.** V. 27. **And the boys grew; and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.** The natural wildness of Esau's character was soon revealed in the fact that he became skilful in the chase, loved to roam across the country far and wide for the mere love of killing game. Jacob was the very opposite, a quiet young man, opposed to all violence, much preferring to remain in the tents and tend to the matters at home. V. 28. **And Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison,** literally, game, the result of the chase, was in his mouth, he was very partial to its wild taste; **but Rebekah loved Jacob,** partly because she remembered the promise of the Lord, partly because of his love for the quiet life of the home.

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT. — V. 29. **And Jacob sod pottage,** he cooked a dish of lentils; **and Esau came from the field,** where he had evidently been engaged in his favorite occupation, **and he was faint,** ravenously hungry after his strenuous exertions. V. 30. **And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint. Therefore was his name called Edom** (red). So great was his craving for food that he was ready to swallow the entire mess of pottage at one gulp, that he could not even think of the name of the vegetables whose sight made him so hungry, but merely referred to that red mess. V. 31. **And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.** This was not a low form of cunning which took advantage of the opponent's weakness, but the believing Jacob made use of the opportunity to acquire legally what belonged to him by the promise of the Lord. V. 32. **And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?** The character of Esau was evidently such as to make him think lightly of the great privilege of being the first-born, since his question conveys the idea: I'm dying of hunger; and why should I worry about my birthright, anyway? Thus he yielded the entire higher import of his birthright, the specific

blessing of Abraham, the inheritance of his posterity, the right and land of the covenant: all for the satisfaction of a moment. V. 33. **And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.** Thus Jacob pursued the advantage which he had gained to the point where he was sure of his gain, for the oath of Esau ratified his promise. V. 34. **Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.** So it was not a mere momentary whim of Esau, for his contempt of his birthright continued even after he had eaten and drunk his fill and was restored to his normal frame of mind. Thus Jacob was filled with a holy seriousness concerning the privileges of the birthright, realizing how much depended upon it in the family of Abraham, while Esau considered the entire matter a joke and acted accordingly. Jacob is a type and example of those that seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, while Esau represents such as renounce the eternal blessings for the sake of temporal gain and enjoyment.

CHAPTER 26.

Isaac in the Land of the Philistines.

THE LORD BLESSES ISAAC. — V. 1. **And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar.** The adventures of Isaac, as related in this chapter, have their parallels in the life of Abraham, and show that human nature does not change, but remains selfish and sinful from one generation to the next. A famine having struck Canaan, Isaac found it advisable to journey down to the land of the Philistines, the hereditary title of whose king was Abimelech. V. 2. **And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt,** that, evidently, having been the intention of Isaac, since Egypt was the granary of all the surrounding countries, especially in lean years. **Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of;** v. 3. **sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham, thy father;** v. 4. **and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;** v. 5. **because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.** Isaac was not to move down into Egypt, because the entire land of Canaan, including the land of the Philistines, was included in the blessing of Jehovah, and was eventually to be the possession of the descendants of Isaac, as the Lord had promised to Abraham with an oath, chap. 22, 16. But in addition to these temporal blessings, the descendants of Isaac according to the promise should also become the bearers of the Messianic hope, according to which all nations of the earth were to be blessed in that one Seed, in the Messiah. All this was a reward for the obedience of faith which Abraham had shown in keeping the charge of God, the special commission entrusted to him, His commandments or express orders, His statutes, certain prescriptions to cover specific cases, and His Law, the great doctrine of moral obligations as it applies to all men.

REBEKAH'S DANGER. — V. 6. **And Isaac dwelt in Gerar,** remaining there after the Lord had appeared unto him. V. 7. **And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister; for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.** Rebekah had been a beautiful woman at the time of her marriage, chap. 24, 16, and she had retained her beauty. Isaac was so well aware of this that he, knowingly or unknowingly, followed the example of his father, chap. 12, 11. 12; chap. 20, replying to the questions concerning the woman living with him that she was his sister. This was a foolish and dangerous perversion of the truth, as events showed. V. 8. **And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah, his wife.** By chance Abimelech, looking out of a window of his palace, became witness of the fact that Isaac, who probably occupied a house with its open court near by, was treating his wife Rebekah with such familiar endearments as are altogether in order between husband and wife, but would hardly be considered permissible between brother and sister. V. 9. **And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.** V. 10. **And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.** The reproof which Abimelech administered was well merited on Isaac's part, and his excuse that he feared to be put to death on her account was very lame. The Lord's promise is that He will keep those that trust in Him in all their ways, that is, as long

as they conduct themselves in conformity with His Word. The weakness of Isaac is related as a warning to us. V. 11. **And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.** The bad experience of the people in the king's house upon the occasion of Abraham's sojourn in Gerar, although three-fourths of a century ago, had not been forgotten, hence the strictness of the injunction on Abimelech's part, which obtained for both Isaac and Rebekah the greatest security, the Lord thus holding His protecting hand over them in spite of their weakness. V. 12. **Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him.** That was an extraordinary blessing of the Lord that Isaac literally found a hundred measures for every measure of grain sowed by him. V. 13. **And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great.** There was no stop, no interruption in his progress in accumulating wealth. V. 14. **For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants; and the Philistines envied him,** jealous of the blessing which the Lord poured out upon him. V. 15. **For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham, his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.** The hostilities which grew out of the envy in the hearts of the Philistines began with their filling up the wells at Gerar, to which Isaac held title, with earth. V. 16. **And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.** To the act of spite was added the direct expulsion by the Philistine king, the reason being that Isaac had become mightier in wealth and power than the Philistines cared to see. Thus the believers of all times are obliged to endure acts of jealousy and open enmity on account of the blessing which the Lord lays upon them; and they must learn to suffer cheerfully for His sake.

The Enmity of the Philistines. — V. 17. **And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.** He left the city of Gerar and the domain of the Philistines in the narrower sense, putting up his encampment farther to the west, in the undulating country toward the mountains. V. 18. **And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham, his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham,** thus disregarding the covenant which had been made between them and Abraham, chap. 21, 22—30. **And he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.** Having gone over the field often while his father was yet alive, Isaac was familiar with the entire country. V. 19. **And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water,** one which was filled with water from a living spring, not a mere cistern for rain water, as most of the wells were. V. 20. **And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours; and he called the name of the well Esek** (contention), **because they strove with him.** V. 21. **And they digged another well, and strove for that also; and he called the name of it Sitnah** (hatred). Isaac suffered all this injustice and harm with the greatest patience and forbearance, preferring to endure rather than to inflict injury, as he probably might have done. V. 22. **And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth** (widths, wide expanses); **and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.** This camp was located still farther to the west, and entirely outside of Philistine jurisdiction, on the extreme southern boundary of Canaan. V. 23. **And he went up from thence to Beersheba,** a matter of some twenty miles to the north. V. 24. **And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham, thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham's sake.** In the midst of the persecution which Isaac was then enduring this encouragement came with all its uplifting strength. The believers are strangers and pilgrims on earth and as such are subjected to many indignities, but the Lord's assurance of His everlasting presence is always the one certain prop for their faith. V. 25. **And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants digged a well.** Isaac here followed the custom of his father Abraham in building an altar and proclaiming the name of Jehovah, in establishing the worship of the true God, not only for his own household, but also for all with whom he came in contact. Every time when believers experience the blessing, protection, and help of the Lord, they turn to Him with all the greater zeal and love and praise His holy name.

The Covenant between Isaac and Abimelech. — V. 26. **Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol, the chief captain of his army.** In this case the Philistine king brought not only the general of his army, but also his prime minister, or private counselor. V. 27. **And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?** V. 28. **And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee; and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a**

covenant with thee, v. 29. that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace; thou art now the blessed of the Lord. Though there were evidently selfish motives behind their proposal, since their chief concern was to gain the friendship of Isaac and obtain security for themselves, yet the Lord made use of these motives to shield and protect His servant. V. 30. **And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.** Isaac was fully aware of his power and importance as a wealthy nomad prince, and made use of the situation to his advantage, without letting it appear that he was granting a favor. V. 31. **And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another,** the oath, in this case, including an imprecation; **and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.** Thus was a new covenant established which safeguarded the interests of Isaac. V. 32. **And it came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.** Apparently the one well which Abraham's servants had dug, chap. 21, 30, was no longer sufficient for the needs of Isaac's immense herds, and therefore the report of the servants was highly welcome. V. 33. **And he called it Shebah** (an oath); **therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.** History here repeated itself, and the name of the city was given for the double reason, just as the two wells at Bir-es-Saba to this day vouch for the correctness of this account.

THE MARRIAGE OF ESAU. — V. 34. **And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri, the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite.** Esau gave proof of the state of his mind toward his parents in taking this important step without asking either their counsel or consent. It is strange, indeed, if marriages contracted in this manner turn out well for all concerned. V. 35. **Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.** They were literally a bitterness of spirit to them, they caused them many a bitter hour, their heathen descent itself being mortifying, and their heathen belief and conduct agreeing with their ancestral traditions. Where temporal, fleshly factors are decisive in the matter of marriage, the chances are that true happiness will not live in such a home. Christian young people will not think of entering upon this most important step without the knowledge and consent of their parents.

CHAPTER 27.

Isaac Blesses His Sons.

ISAAC PREPARES TO BLESS ESAU. — V. 1. **And it came to pass that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau, his eldest son, and said unto him, My son; and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.** Isaac was by this time one hundred and thirty-seven years old, and the infirmities of old age were beginning to show themselves in his failing eyesight; literally, in his eyes becoming weak away from seeing. He now, in a formal and solemn manner, called for Esau, his favorite son. V. 2. **And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.** As a matter of fact, he lived another forty-three years, but the preparations which he made showed the prudence which characterized him. Every believer should set his house in order betimes and be ready to meet death when it comes. V. 3. **Now, therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;** v. 4. **and make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.** It was not the sudden whim of an old man which was here revealed, but a carefully prepared plan, according to which Esau was to obtain some game by chase and then to prepare the meat in a way of which he knew that it pleased his father. In spite of the divine utterance before the birth of the children, which was undoubtedly known to him, and the careless and almost contemptuous disposal of his birthright by Esau, in spite, also, of the latter's objectionable marriage to the Canaanitish woman, Isaac persisted in his preference for Esau, even in the very important matter of transmitting the Messianic promise. Even in believers the weakness of the flesh will often grow into a sulky obstinacy in ignoring God's manifest guidance.

REBEKAH ARRANGES TO HAVE JACOB BLESSED FIRST. — V. 5. **And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau, his son.** This overhearing of Isaac's plan by Rebekah was due to the dispensation of God. **And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.** V. 6. **And Rebekah spake unto Jacob, her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau, thy brother, saying,** v. 7. **Bring me venison, and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.** Rebekah made Jacob her confederate by making known to him all that she had found out. V. 8. **Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.** V. 9. **Go now to the flock,** which included goats as well as sheep, **and fetch me from thence**

two good kids of the goats, an ample supply being needed in order to represent venison; and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth, for Rebekah was also familiar with Isaac's tastes and knew in what form he preferred his roast venison. V. 10. **And thou shalt bring it to thy father that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.** Thus Jacob was given to understand what rôle he was to play in Rebekah's plan. V. 11. **And Jacob said to Rebekah, his mother, Behold, Esau, my brother, is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man;** v. 12. **my father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.** This was partly prudence, partly the voice of conscience which told him that he would be making himself a scoffer in the eyes of his old blind father, one making sport of the latter's infirmity, and the discovery would result in his bringing away a curse instead of a blessing. Out of respect for his mother Jacob does not refer to the wrong itself, but to its dangerous consequences. V. 13. **And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.** Both the blame and the curse which might strike Jacob Rebekah was willing to shoulder, for with her to plan meant to act, to pursue her course to the finish. V. 14. **And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved.** V. 15. **And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob, her younger son.** They were garments of preciousness, and Rebekah planned to have both the touch and the odor of the garments deceive Isaac. V. 16. **And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck.** It seems that Angora goats are here referred to, whose long, silky wool resembled human hair. V. 17. **And she gave the savory meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.** Thus Rebekah had taken the matter of the patriarchal blessing into her own hands. She had in mind, of course, the promise which she had received, but her rashness caused her to identify her plan with the plan of God. She felt that she must come to the aid of the divine dispensation, but her manner of acting had neither God's command nor His promise. It was the mercy of the Lord which afterward turned her human machinations for the best.

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB. — V. 18. **And he came unto his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?** V. 19. **And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau, thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me; arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.** Jacob here became guilty of his mother's deceit in deed as well as in words and intent, for he was not Esau, nor was the meat which he was bringing venison. So far as he was concerned, he was trying to obtain his father's blessing under false pretenses. V. 20. **And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord, thy God, brought it to me.** Upon Isaac's surprised question: How is this? Thou wast quick to find; — Jacob piously refers the supposed luck of his chase to a special blessing of the Lord. V. 21. **And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.** Isaac's surprise changes into suspicion at the sound of Jacob's voice and at the indefinite answer which was so unlike Esau's blunt manner. But it was here that Rebekah's stratagem proved its worth. V. 22. **And Jacob went near unto Isaac, his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.** Isaac was much nearer being convinced, but his suspicions were not yet allayed altogether. V. 23. **And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.** Isaac did not know and recognize Jacob for the person who he really was, the hairiness of his wrists making him inclined to think him Esau, so he made ready to bless him, the act being anticipated by the author. V. 24. **And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.** This bold answer settled the doubts of Isaac to such an extent that he was ready for the meal. V. 25. **And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat; and he brought him wine, and he drank.** Thus Jacob gained his first step. V. 26. **And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.** It was the kiss of the father which was to introduce the blessing. V. 27. **And he came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his raiment** which the strategy of Rebekah had placed on him, since their odor was that of the fields and of the chase; **and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.** Isaac's blessing consisted of inspired utterances looking into the future and transmitting the special blessing of the Lord to Jacob. V. 28. **Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.** These were temporal gifts, of great importance in the country which Jacob and his children were to possess. The quantity of the dew, especially during the dry season, determined the fruitfulness of the land. The fat, productive fields of the earth were to be his, the result being a rich yield of grain and

new wine. V. 29. **Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.** This part of the blessing describes the position of influence and power which the descendants of Jacob were to occupy. Not only over his brethren, over the people of his own race, including the children of his brother, he was to be lord, but also over strange people and nations. The idea of a world dominion is thus brought out, culminating in the promise that men would be judged according to their attitude toward him and his descendants. Thus the blessing looks forward to the Messiah, the touchstone of the ages, for to this day the right answer to the question: What think ye of Christ? decides the fate of every person in the world.

ESAU RETURNS AND RECEIVES THE YOUNGER SON'S BLESSING.—V. 30. **And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac, his father, that Esau, his brother, came in from his hunting.** It was just as Isaac had finished his blessing upon Jacob and the latter had just barely stepped out of the room that Esau returned from the chase. V. 31. **And he also had made savory meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison that thy soul may bless me.** Esau, for once, was serious, and therefore lost no time in preparing the game which he had shot and taking it in to his father, with the humble request for the promised blessing. V. 32. **And Isaac, his father, said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau.** V. 33. **And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed.** Esau's simple statement, so obviously the truth, caused the greatest agitation in Isaac's manner; literally, he trembled a great trembling very exceedingly, and then broke out into various questions as to the identity of the person who had so cleverly obtained the chief blessing from him. But even before Isaac pronounces the name of Jacob, he must state that the blessing of the Lord will remain with him. It was not for him to withdraw the blessing which was in fact that of the Lord, and Isaac now realized that his fleshly preference for Esau could not be defended in the sight of God. No matter in what manner the blessing had been obtained, God had guided the affair so that Jacob now actually was the bearer of the patriarchal succession. V. 34. **And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.** He now realized, when it was too late, what he had lost, what he had formerly foolishly despised. His words seem to indicate that he thought the blessing could still be divided. V. 35. **And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.** That was the human side of the happening, the deception, the error and sin which had crept into the business. V. 36. **And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob** (heel-catcher, supplanter)? **For he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing.** Esau was now in a state of mind which prevented his proper repentance, for there was no excuse for his selling his birthright. **And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?** Just as though Isaac was able to set aside such blessings at will. V. 37. **And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?** This was an attempt to explain the situation to Esau, to make it clear to him that there was only one patriarchal blessing, which included both the promise of the land of Canaan in its most fruitful form and the special lordship with its culmination in the person of the Messiah. V. 38. **And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.** It is to this scene that Heb. 12, 17 refers, for Esau could not persuade his father to reconsider his decision, although he made the effort with tears. His were in this case not tears of true repentance over his sin, but merely of bitterness over the result of his folly. This fact Isaac now understood. V. 39. **And Isaac, his father, answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above.** Of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven would Esau's dwelling-place be, that is, away from the fruitful and fat fields of Canaan. There are some fertile valleys in the northeastern part of Idumea, where Esau and his descendants lived, but the greater part of Idumea is one of the dreariest and most sterile deserts in the world. V. 40. **And by thy sword shalt thou live,** war, pillage, and robbery being almost necessary in the barren land which would be his habitation, **and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.** History shows that this prophecy was fulfilled. "Edom was at first strong and independent as compared to Israel, slower in its development (Num. 20, 14). Saul first fought against it victoriously (1 Sam. 14, 47); David conquered it (2 Sam. 8, 14).

Then followed a conspiracy under Solomon (1 Kings 11, 14), whilst there was an actual defection under Joram. On the other hand, the Edomites were again subjected by Amaziah (2 Kings 14, 7; 2 Chron. 25, 11) and remained dependent under Uzziah and Jotham (2 Kings 14, 22; 2 Chron. 26, 2). But under Ahaz they liberated themselves entirely from Judah (2 Kings 16, 6; 2 Chron. 28, 17). Finally, however, John Hyrcanus subdued them completely, and incorporated them into the Jewish state and people, whilst the Jews themselves, however, after Antipater, became subject to the dominion of an Idumean dynasty, until the downfall of their state."

ESAU'S HATRED OF JACOB.—V. 41. **And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him; and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.** Having failed in his attempt to change his father's mind in the matter of the patriarchal blessing, the hatred of Esau turned against Jacob, and he planned to revenge himself by murdering his brother. During the lifetime of his father he did not want to execute this threat, in order not to grieve Isaac. But after the death of Isaac, which seemed to be near, and after the days of mourning for his father, he would have no more scruples in carrying out his design. V. 42. **And these words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.** So Esau, in carrying out his purpose of revenge, planned to get satisfaction for himself; he thought he would feel better after having murdered his brother. V. 43. **Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban, my brother, to Haran;** v. 44. **and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;** v. 45. **until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him; then I will send, and fetch thee from thence.** Rebekah tries to encourage Jacob and to comfort herself by intimating that it would be a matter of only a few days, of a very short time, until the wrath and anger of Esau would die down and be forgotten. **Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?** If Jacob should be murdered, the avenger of blood would be set on Esau's tracks, and he also would thus be lost to his mother. Cp. chap. 9, 6; 2 Sam. 14, 6. V. 46. **And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?** The wives of Esau were a bitterness of spirit not only to Rebekah, but also to Isaac, chap. 26, 35, and therefore the mention of this unbearable condition at this time was intended to pave the way for her plan of having Jacob sent to Mesopotamia, out of harm's way. That the children of God are persecuted by the children of the world is a common experience, but God holds His sheltering and protecting hand over those that are His.

CHAPTER 28.

Jacob's Flight and Dream.

JACOB DISMISSED IN PEACE. — V. 1. **And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.** What Rebekah had planned came to pass; Isaac saw the point of her objection and took the hint given in her words. Isaac formally called Jacob, welcomed him with all kindness, and then gave him the definite command not to marry a Canaanitish woman. V. 2. **Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother.** There was evidently some, at least occasional, communication between the two families of relatives, since Isaac knew of the daughters of Laban. V. 3. **And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;** v. 4. **and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.** The words of Isaac unmistakably point to the fact that he now openly recognized Jacob as the chosen heir. The consciousness of his patriarchal calling was awakened in him, and he had the strength to give the blessing of Abraham, which included the Messianic promise, to the son whom he would have rejected, but whom God had chosen. V. 5. **And Isaac sent away Jacob; and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel, the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.** Bethuel had by this time either died or was no longer actively engaged in business, therefore Laban, Jacob's uncle, is spoken of as the head of the household. V. 6. **When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob,** thus openly acknowledging him as the bearer of the patriarchal blessing, **and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;** v. 7. **and that Jacob obeyed his**

father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; v. 8. **and Esau, seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac, his father,** literally, were evil in his eyes; v. 9. **then went Esau unto Ishmael, that is,** to the house of Ishmael, the father himself having been dead more than twelve years, **and took unto,** in addition to, **the wives which he had Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.** This woman, chap. 36, 2, is called Bashemath, and she was called the sister of Nebajoth, because he was her oldest brother. Esau probably intended to regain the full regard of his father by this act, since this third wife was a descendant of Abraham, but merely betrayed his utter lack of understanding, so far as the relation of the patriarchs to the prophecies of the Lord with regard to the possession of this land was concerned, for Ishmael and his children were not to be heirs with the son of Sarah.

JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL. — V. 10. **And Jacob went out from Beersheba,** in the extreme southern part of Canaan, where Isaac then had his camp, **and went toward Haran,** traveling first toward the north. V. 11. **And he lighted upon a certain place,** he apparently struck this place by chance, although it was a matter of God's guidance, **and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.** The place where this occurred is designated even here in such a manner as to draw attention to its later importance. V. 12. **And He dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.** V. 13. **And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed;** v. 14. **and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.** This was a wonderful revelation of God, together with a confirmation of the Messianic promise given through the mouth of Isaac. The entire picture shows the uninterrupted communication, the intimate communion between God and the believers on earth. The angels of God accompany the believers and protect them in all their ways, and represent them in their difficulties and tribulations, bringing God's help and protection down from heaven in return. The ladder stood on the earth, where Jacob lay, apparently all alone and forsaken, with not a foot of ground to call his own, but at its top stood the almighty God, whose promises never fail. It was in one of his first speeches that Jesus referred to this vision of Jacob, John 1, 51. In the person of Jesus Christ heaven and earth, God and man, are united in a singular and most marvelous manner, and through Christ, the incarnate Son of God, we enter into communion with God. V. 15. **And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.** In addition to the Messianic promise, which ever afterward was the greatest comfort of Jacob, just as it is the hope of all believers, the Lord gave him an assurance concerning his own personal welfare on his journeys. Jacob was able to rely upon the definite, infallible fulfilment of the Lord's promises, which are just as certain to-day as they were then and therefore require the same unquestioning acceptance.

JACOB'S VOW. — V. 16. **And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.** The presence of God was in this place, remote as it was from the spot where the true worship of God was fostered, namely, in his father's house, and he had had no knowledge of it. Jehovah in His merciful grace was near to him, surrounded him even at this distance from his home with His kindness. V. 17. **And he was afraid,** filled with reverent awe, **and said, How dreadful is this place!** Cp. Ex. 3, 5. The associations of this place would ever afterward fill his mind with that holy fear and reverence which sinful creatures are bound to feel in the presence of God. **This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.** Where God reveals Himself, whether in a vision or in His Word, there is the place of His habitation, there His grace opens heaven itself to the sinner seeking only His mercy. V. 18. **And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.** He thus observed the usual ceremonies of consecration in setting apart this spot as one hallowed by the appearance of the Lord and setting up the stone which had served as his head-rest as an earnest of the sanctuary to be erected there in the future. V. 19. **And he called the name of that place Bethel** (the house of God); **but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.** The name Luz was used by the Canaanites to designate both the city and the surrounding country, but the children of Israel, after the conquest, named the district Bethel, after the name that it bore since this happening. V. 20. **And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,** v. 21. **so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the**

Lord be my God; v. 22. **and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.** It was not a condition which Jacob here expressed, but a thankful acknowledgment of the divine assurance. By this vow Jacob accepted the promise of the Lord and declared what, in his estimation, was included in it. He had a definite event before his eyes, for the stone which at present served only as a reminder of the miraculous vision, would be replaced by a monument of the presence and dwelling of God with His people, and of the gifts of God which would come to him as a result of that promise he herewith dedicated the tenth part to the Lord in return. That is the proper form of trust in God, to accept His promises in simple faith, and to worship and serve Him in turn.

CHAPTER 29.

Jacob's Marriage.

JACOB ARRIVES IN MESOPOTAMIA. — V. 1. **Then Jacob went on his journey,** literally, he lifted up his feet, that is, he continued on his trip cheerfully, **and came into the land of the people of the East,** to Mesopotamia beyond the Euphrates, which lay to the northeast from Canaan. This journey differed somewhat from that of Eliezer, almost a hundred years before, since Jacob, now seventy-seven years old, made the entire distance afoot. V. 2. **And he looked, and, behold, a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered their flocks; and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.** Knowing that he must be near his destination, Jacob took more careful note of his surroundings and saw this well, or cistern, in the field, with a great stone covering its opening. V. 3. **And thither were all the flocks gathered,** there they were driven at stated times during the day; **and they,** the shepherds, **rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.** Water was apparently not too plentiful in the neighborhood, and it was necessary to use the greatest care in keeping the available supply pure. V. 4. **And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we.** V. 5. **And he said unto them, Know ye Laban, the son** (in the wider sense, for he was the grandson) **of Nahor? And they said, We know him.** V. 6. **And he said unto them, Is he well?** "Is there peace to him?" **And they said, He is well; and, behold, Rachel, his daughter, cometh,** is even now coming, **with the sheep.** V. 7. **And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together,** for he assumed that the shepherds would immediately afterwards take them to the enclosure or corral for the night; **water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.** This was not an undue assumption of authority on the part of Jacob, but merely a scheme to remove the shepherds, for naturally he would have preferred to meet his cousin, whom he even now regarded as a probable wife, alone, and not in the presence of the slaves. V. 8. **And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.** Ordinarily, therefore, it took two or more men to roll the stone away from the opening of the cistern, and they had received orders to come together at a stated time, lest there be delay and trouble in the care of the flocks.

JACOB MEETS RACHEL. — V. 9. **And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them.** Rachel was a shepherdess of her father, just as the virgin daughters of the Arabians are to this day. V. 10. **And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother.** The joy which Jacob felt in reaching his destination in safety after his long, lonely, and dangerous journey through the desert and his delight in meeting his cousin so soon, gave him unusual, heroic strength. V. 11. **And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.** His age and relationship made such an intimate greeting altogether proper, and even now bridal affection may have arisen in his heart, for that was one of the purposes of his journey, to take one of the daughters of Laban for his wife. V. 12. **And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother,** in the wider sense, that of a close relative, **and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.** Rachel was now, in turn, overjoyed, a fact which caused her to seek her father with all haste. V. 13. **And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house,** thus offering him a hearty welcome. **And he told Laban all these things,** all that was necessary to explain his journey. V. 14. **And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.** He was satisfied with the account as given by Jacob, for it proved conclusively that

the latter was his nephew. **And he abode with him the space of a month,** thus becoming acquainted both with the family and with the circumstances of the family. Thus the Lord had guided the steps of Jacob, just as He watches over the steps of all His children on earth. In spite of many hardships and privations they usually manage to find a home and friends, the Lord thus giving evidence of His fatherly care.

JACOB SERVES LABAN FOR RACHEL. — V. 15. **And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for naught? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?** Jacob had not been idle during the month after his arrival, but had shown himself so willing and so skilful that Laban was glad to take him into his employ, if they could agree upon terms. V. 16. **And Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.** That Jacob would eventually press his suit for one of these Laban knew, and his offer served to pave the way. V. 17. **Leah was tender-eyed,** that is, her eyes were weak and dull, she was no beauty in the sense of the Orient; **but Rachel was beautiful and well favored,** she had beauty of form and beauty of face, her eyes especially showing a brightness and luster which is regarded so highly in the East. V. 18. **And Jacob loved Rachel and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter,** this service taking the place of the customary dowry and the presents given to the relatives. V. 19. **And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man; abide with me.** Laban acted with assumed indifference, for his selfishness and covetousness expected great gain for himself by this arrangement. V. 20. **And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her.** In comparison with the prize which was held out to him at the end of the seven years, all the hardships of the service seemed insignificant. His love for Rachel made him cheerful and joyful, even while he longed for the end of the seven years.

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL. — V. 21. **And Jacob said unto Laban,** at the end of the seven years, **Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.** Note that he calls Rachel his wife, although only engaged to her, for a rightful betrothal is as binding as marriage in the sight of God. V. 22. **And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.** He arranged the customary marriage-festival, making it as splendid as his wealth allowed. V. 23. **And it came to pass in the evening that he took Leah, his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.** This deception on Laban's part could be carried out all the more easily, since custom required that the bride be heavily veiled when led to the bridegroom and to the bridal chamber. V. 24. **And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah, his maid, for an handmaid.** This fact is here expressly mentioned on account of later developments. V. 25. **And it came to pass that, in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore, then, hast thou beguiled me?** While the fraud which was practised upon Jacob may, in a sense, be regarded as a just punishment, his reproof of Laban was nevertheless fully justified, and he might well, according to the contract, have dismissed Leah. V. 26. **And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.** Granted that this was an established custom in the place, or district, where Laban was living, his excuse was still a flimsy pretext, for his business would have been to acquaint Jacob with that custom at the time the contract was made. His selfish motives, especially his avarice, here came to the surface, even as it was in evidence more and more in the succeeding years. V. 27. **Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.** The nuptial feast lasting seven days, Jacob was to confirm his marriage with Leah by accepting her as his wife during this time. In the second week he was then given Rachel as his wife, with the understanding that he would serve another seven years for her, thus really paying a greater price than he owed. V. 28. **And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and he gave him Rachel, his daughter, to wife also.** On either side, sinful weaknesses had played a rôle, and therefore Jacob's married life in more than one instance became a school of afflictions. V. 29. **And Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter, Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her maid.** This fact is also expressly stated on account of later developments. V. 30. **And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.** That bigamy, polygamy, is a perversion of God's original order, since marriage is to be a monogamy, the union of one man and one woman, appears even here, for it was impossible for Jacob to distribute his affections with impartiality. In spite of the fact, therefore, that the blessing of God upon Abraham made use also of these means to make of the descendants of Abraham a great nation, it is clear, nevertheless, that much of the subsequent trouble was due to this unnatural arrangement.

THE FIRST SONS OF LEAH. — V. 31. **And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated,** that is, that she was loved less than Rachel, **he opened her womb** and thus prepared her

for bearing children, which are His blessing. **But Rachel was barren,** also by God's dispensation. V. 32. **And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben** (Behold, a son!); **for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now, therefore, my husband will love me.** Since children were so particularly desirable at the time of the patriarchs, Leah, whose love for Jacob was so deep and strong that she had even consented to Laban's deception, hoped to have her husband's affection turn to her also. V. 33. **And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also; and she called his name Simeon** (hearing). God had heard her prayer for another son, and she believed this to be a guarantee that her husband would eventually love her also. V. 34. **And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons; therefore was his name called Levi** (attachment). From her earlier hope of gaining the full love of her husband and of being on an equality with Rachel before him she now drew back to the hope that he would at least remain attached to her in constant affection. V. 35. **And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she said, Now will I praise the Lord; therefore she called his name Judah** (praise of God, one for whom one praises God); **and left bearing.** Leah now turned entirely away from herself to Jehovah, who now also stopped her bearing for a time, lest she begin to trust in herself. The lesson that all good gifts come down from God and are given by His merciful goodness cannot be learned too well.

CHAPTER 30.

The Children and the Increasing Wealth of Jacob.

The Sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. — V. 1. **And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.** Barrenness was considered a special punishment and curse of God in the Old Testament, especially in the families of the patriarchs, in whose case the longing for the Messiah intensified the desire for children. Rachel, therefore, seeing her sister Leah bearing one son after the other, was filled with envy and impatience, believing, apparently, that all her prayers for offspring were vain. That explains her outburst of temper, which caused her to state that she would die from dejection and grief unless Jacob would manage to bring her children. V. 2. **And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?** The stern reproof of Jacob was fully deserved by Rachel: In the place of God am I supposed to be, who has denied thee children? He was powerless so far as his own strength was concerned, and probably, together with Rachel, did not make a sufficient use of prayer as a power to storm the heart of God. V. 3. **And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.** This was not the manner of faith, but the expedient of the flesh: the children of Rachel's slave would belong to her mistress, all the more so if Jacob, at Rachel's suggestion, was the father. V. 4. **And she gave him Bilhah, her handmaid, to wife; and Jacob went in unto her.** His own condition of mind with regard to his favorite wife's barrenness and his advancing age, since he was now almost ninety years old, caused Jacob to agree to his wife's plan. V. 5. **And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.** V. 6. **And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son; therefore called she his name Dan** (judge). So Rachel considered the situation as a quarrel between herself and her sister, in which God had now put aside the injustice in giving her a son by proxy. V. 7. **And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.** V. 8. **And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed; and she called his name Naphtali** (one obtained by wrestling). In the struggle between herself and Leah, yea, between herself and God, Rachel had succeeded in obtaining also this son. Her words indicate her longing to share in the patriarchal blessing, although there is still a measure of self-will in her statement. V. 9. **When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah, her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife,** thus following the example of her sister. The matter was now actually becoming a carnal struggle. V. 10. **And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a son.** V. 11. **And Leah said, A troop cometh; and she called his name Gad** (good fortune). She considered the birth of this son a fortunate event to herself. V. 12. **And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a second son.** V. 13. **And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed; and she called his name Asher** (the happy one). She believed that daughters, women, no matter where they might be, would consider her fortunate and happy in having brought her husband six sons. It seems that the Lord's blessing did not enter into Leah's calculations at this time.

It was simply a race between herself and Rachel.

THE LAST CHILDREN OF LEAH. — V. 14. **And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah.** Little Reuben, at that time about four or five years old, found the berries of the mandrake in the field. These berries are yellow, strong, but sweet-smelling, about the size of a nutmeg, and were generally believed to promote fruitfulness and to take the place of a love-potion. **Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.** This shows to what point the mutual jealousy of the two women had grown, in placing their trust even in such supposed remedies. V. 15. **And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? And wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also?** Thus Leah was smarting under the sense of being unloved or merely suffered as a wife: Is a small matter thy taking of my husband? **And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.** So these were the conditions of the trade: Rachel was to have the mandrakes, and she, in return, yielded Jacob to Leah for this one time. V. 16. **And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes.** So Leah insisted upon her bargain. **And he lay with her that night.** V. 17. **And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.** So it was not the natural remedy of the mandrakes which produced fruitfulness, but the blessing of the Lord, the God of creation. V. 18. **And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband; and she called his name Issachar** (he who brings reward). She believed this son to be the reward of God for her having yielded her servant to her husband. V. 19. **And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son.** V. 20. **And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons; and she called his name Zebulun** (dwelling). Although this detailed account of the most intimate relations between Jacob and his wives shows the weakness and sinfulness of their natures, yet it was not mere carnal desire and jealousy that filled their hearts, but they always had in mind, more or less distinctly, the Messianic promise and its significance. V. 21. **And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah,** mentioned here on account of her later history, chap. 34.

THE BIRTH OF JOSEPH. — V. 22. **And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.** It seems, then, that when all her schemes and stratagems failed, she turned to God in fervent and patient prayer, and that the Lord, in answer, removed her barrenness. V. 23. **And she conceived, and bare a son, and said, God hath taken away my reproach;** v. 24. **and she called his name Joseph** (He shall add); **and said, The Lord shall add to me another son.** In taking away from Rachel the reproach of her unfruitfulness, the Lord had added to her the hope that He would add a second son. This wish was later fulfilled, chap. 35, 16—18. It is undoubtedly correct to assume, from the subsequent story, that the eleven children of Jacob, from Reuben to Joseph, were born in the seven years after his marriage, not exactly in a chronological succession as narrated, but so that Leah gave birth to her four sons during the first four years. Dan and Naphtali were probably likewise born during this period, the children of Zilpah immediately after, Leah herself again becoming a mother in the sixth and seventh years, and Joseph being born about the end of the seventh year, when Jacob was ninety-one years old. The entire story shows that the fear of the Lord makes for true happiness in the home, for believers rely upon the Lord for all good gifts and gratefully receive them at His hands.

THE CONTRACT BETWEEN LABAN AND JACOB. V. 25. **And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place and to my country.** The fourteen years of Jacob's service had now come to a close, and, since he did not consider Mesopotamia his home, but a strange country, he longed to go back to his own land, to Canaan. Therefore he asked for his dismissal. V. 26. **Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go; for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.** Laban had to concede the faithfulness of Jacob in all his work, particularly since he had, till now, had all the better of the bargain. V. 27. **And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry; for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.** Laban couched his request in the most careful language, although he had only selfish motives in asking Jacob to stay. V. 28. **And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.** He appears to yield unconditionally to any demand which Jacob might make, but he was really calculating upon Jacob's willingness and humility. V. 29. **And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me.** V. 30. **For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming,** the blessing of Jehovah had, literally, followed Ja-

cob's feet: **and now, when shall I provide for mine own house also?** There was really a strong hint in these words, telling Laban that he would do well to set him up in the cattle business for himself. But Laban repeated his question. V. 31. **And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me anything; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock.** It was now cunning against cunning, for Jacob declined to trust himself to the generosity of Laban, having learned to read the character of his uncle aright. V. 32. **I will pass through all thy flock to-day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and of such shall be my hire.** The terms of this contract were based upon the fact that the goats in the Orient are usually black or dark-brown, seldom white or speckled with white, the sheep on the contrary usually white, seldom black or speckled. The proposition, therefore, seemed to be very one-sided in favor of Laban. V. 33. **So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face; every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.** If Laban should at any time find in his flocks such animals as did not measure up to this description, he was at liberty to accuse Jacob of theft. V. 34. **And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.** He was fully satisfied with a plan which promised to be all in his favor. V. 35. **And he removed that day the he-goats that were ring-straked** (banded) **and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.** Laban took every precaution that he could think of, personally supervising the elimination of all the dark and spotted among the sheep and the light and spotted among the goats. V. 36. **And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.** By putting his own sons in charge of his flocks and by placing such a great distance between the two sets of flocks, Laban thought he had effectually curbed Jacob's ambition. His entire conduct was that of a selfish, covetous man, who made use of every possible means to reduce Jacob's wages.

JACOB'S GREAT WEALTH. — V. 37. **And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel- and chestnut-tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.** Since the bark of the Oriental gum, the almond or walnut, and the maple is dark, while all of them have a white, dazzling wood, they lent themselves very well for this purpose. V. 38. **And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink.** The impression which the animals at the time of conception were thus to receive was to be so sudden, deep, and lasting that it would affect the color of their offspring. V. 39. **And the flocks conceived before the rods,** while they had their picture before them, **and brought forth cattle ring-straked** (banded), **speckled, and spotted.** Jacob's scheme worked beautifully, causing his flocks to increase very rapidly. V. 40. **And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ring-straked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.** By this second device the black goats and the white sheep were always kept by themselves, nothing in their own herd exciting their attention, whereas the herds of spotted and speckled animals in plain view were bound to make an impression upon the animals at the time of breeding. V. 41. **And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods,** in the very midst of the pilled staves. This was in the spring, for the lambs and kids born in the fall were considered the stronger and better. V. 42. **But when the cattle were feeble,** in the late fall, when the pasturage was no longer so good, **he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.** Thus Jacob, with the blessing of God, chap. 31, 12, succeeded in obtaining some of the wages which were so richly due him for his many years of faithful service. He used all his business sagacity in beating his covetous uncle at his own game, but incidentally kept his word not to appropriate so much as one animal that did not belong to him. V. 43. **And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.** All this he acquired, with the blessing of God, in the next six years. Without the blessing of God all wealth is a curse.

CHAPTER 31.

Jacob Leaves Mesopotamia.

THE PLAN TO FLEE. — V. 1. **And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.** That was the voice of envy, which begrudged Jacob the obvious blessing of God, incidentally revealing a very ugly suspicion, as is customary in such cases. V. 2. **And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.** Laban no longer concealed his selfishness and covetousness, with the resulting ill will against Jacob. V. 3. **And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.** Canaan was the land of Jacob's fathers, chap. 17, 8; 26, 3; there lived his nearest relatives. The Lord therefore not only bade him return, but also assured him of His protection. V. 4. **And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,** v. 5. **and said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before.** Yesterday and the day before, in the first years of Jacob's service, the gain which Jacob brought him had caused Laban to be kind enough, but now envy had taken possession of his heart also, together with covetousness. **But the God of my father hath been with me;** the God whom Isaac, his father, had worshiped, who had revealed Himself in mercy and with the promise of His blessing upon Jacob. V. 6. **And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.** As Jacob had emphasized his faithfulness over against Laban, chap. 30, 30. 33, so he could truthfully point to it in the presence of Laban's daughters, his wives. V. 7. **And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times.** This puts another ugly blot upon Laban's character, for as the contract was made, chap. 30, 34, no changes were looked for. Yet Laban had frequently and in an arbitrary manner altered its provisions in favor of himself. **But God suffered him not to hurt me,** neither in body nor in goods. V. 8. **If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, The ring-straked** (banded) **shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ring-straked.** When Laban noted that his cattle were bearing in favor of Jacob, according to the original contract, he changed the stipulation from time to time, making it ever more difficult for Jacob to gain, since the provisions were narrowed more with every new agreement. V. 9. **Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.** Jacob thus confesses and acknowledges with thankfulness that it was the Lord who had watched over his interests, turned the evil intention in his favor, and multiplied that part of the flock which was set apart for his wages. V. 10. **And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ring-straked, speckled, and grisled** (dappled). It was, accordingly, the dispensation of God which had governed the increase of Jacob's flocks, without which even the keenest business sagacity would have availed him nothing. V. 11. **And the Angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob; and I said, Here am I.** This is again the Angel of the Lord in a special sense, Jehovah, the Son of God, as He often revealed Himself to His children in the Old Testament. V. 12. **And He said, Lift up now thine eyes and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ring-straked, speckled, and grisled; for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.** Apparently Jacob had had a number of visions in the course of the six years, the Lord indicating to him that He was looking out for his interests, but the climax had come in the recent dream. V. 13. **I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me.** The Angel of the Lord was identical with the God of Bethel, with the God who revealed Himself at Bethel as exalted above the angels. Jacob had confessed his faith in the true God both by consecrating the place at Bethel and by making his earnest vow. **Now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.** Jacob thus urged not only the envy and injustice of Laban, but the direct command of God as well, for their immediate flight. V. 14. **And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?** Laban's treatment of his daughters made it appear that he was glad to get rid of them. V. 15. **Are we not counted of him strangers? For he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.** Laban's conduct toward his daughters made it seem that he considered them sold to Jacob for the fourteen years' service. And not only that, but the very price, the very money that their services were worth to him, he retained for himself; he devoured their very substance, wherein they received no share. V. 16. **For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours and our children's; now, then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.** Laban is an example of a covetous, hard-hearted, and tyrannical man, who has only his own advantage in mind and considers no one else's rights. It is from people of this stamp that pious, faithful men are obliged to endure much suffering. But God watches over His children and will permit no harm to strike them without His permission.

Jacob Flees and is Pursued by Laban. — V. 17. **Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;** v. 18. **and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac, his father, in the land of Canaan.** Jacob's plans had evidently been laid and all arrangements made with great care even before he summoned his wives for the conference which decided in favor of immediate flight. The text repeatedly emphasizes the fact that all the wealth in cattle and goods which Jacob had collected and took along with him on his flight was such as he had honestly gotten. V. 19. **And Laban went to shear his sheep; and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.** The fact that Laban, with his sons, was keeping the feast of sheep-shearing, which lasted several days, gave Jacob the opportunity which he had sought, for Laban would never have permitted him to go in peace. There is no wrong in fleeing from a tyrant and seeking a place where one may live in peace and security and tend to the works of his calling without interference. That Rachel, although a believer in the true God, stole the images, the small household gods of her father, probably because she feared that Laban might consult them as oracles, shows that she was not yet entirely free from heathen superstition. V. 20. **And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban, the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.** Jacob took the opportunity to remove himself and his goods without the knowledge of Laban, 2 Sam. 15, 6, neither was the fact told to the older man. V. 21. **So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the Mount Gilead.** He forded the Euphrates, and then turned directly southwest toward Mount Gilead, on the farther side of the Jarmuk River, southeast of the Sea of Galilee. V. 22. **And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.** V. 23. **And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the Mount Gilead.** Jacob had a start of three days, but he was hampered by his large herds, whereas Laban, with his tribesmen, could travel very rapidly. Still Jacob had made excellent time in the ten days of his journey. V. 24. **And God came to Laban, the Syrian, a** name used to distinguish him from the members of God's own people, **in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.** Literally, Laban should, in speaking to Jacob, not pass from good to bad, from a hasty greeting of his daughters and their children to reproaches and other indications of anger. The power of the enemies of God, so far as His children are concerned, is limited by God's permission.

Laban Scolds Jacob. — V. 25. **Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount; and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.** So Jacob had gone into camp on the height of the mountain range of which Mount Gilead was the highest peak, and Laban, in overtaking him with his kinsmen, also pitched his tent. V. 26. **And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword?** Laban believed that he would make the greatest impression upon Jacob by feigning outraged fatherly love and acted accordingly, accusing him of leading his daughters off like captives of war, against their will. V. 27. **Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?** In his passionate reproach Laban heaps the expressions which are intended to make Jacob appear as a low sneak, whereas he intimates that his own generosity would not have failed to provide an appropriate farewell festival, with joy and with songs, with drum, or tabret, and with zither. V. 28. **And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.** The entire behavior of Jacob is here labeled downright folly by Laban. V. 29. **It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.** The band which Laban had brought along was indeed large enough to inflict severe harm upon Jacob, and it was only the fear of God's punishment which deterred him from following his inclination. At this point the animosity of Laban evidently caused him to forget all prudence and to betray his bitterness and his real intention. V. 30. **And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?** Laban means to say that there is some explanation for Jacob's leaving, even if it was done in secret, but no excuse could be found for the stealing of his gods, of which he now accuses Jacob outright. V. 31. **And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid; for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.** That was answering the first question of Laban, as to why Jacob had left Mesopotamia in the manner he did, and it did not reveal the most flattering opinion of Laban. And so far as the accusation was concerned: V. 32. **With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live; before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee.** The statement shows the emphasis with which Jacob resented the

suspicion of thieving which was raised against him. He boldly invited Laban to institute a search in the presence of their kinsmen and declares that the person with whom the images should be found had merited death. **For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.** V. 33. **And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maid-servants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.** So sure was Laban of his ground that he made his search very thorough. There is an irony in the fact that the idolater searches for his gods and cannot find them. V. 34. **Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture,** under the large saddle with its heavy hangings and deep basket, **and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not.** He went over everything in the tent very thoroughly, not only peering around, but even feeling with his hands. V. 35. **And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee,** as filial respect would have demanded; **for the custom of women is upon me.** Whether this was actually true or not, she proved herself a worthy daughter of a cunning father, for the ruse served to keep Laban from looking under the saddle which Rachel was using as a couch. At a later period this matter was regulated by law, Lev. 15, 19 ff. Thus the Lord did not permit Jacob, who knew nothing of Rachel's trick, to be put to shame.

JACOB REBUKES LABAN. — V. 36. **And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? What is my sin that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?** The advantage was now entirely on Jacob's side, and he lost no time in making use of it, but called Laban to account for his attitude as well as for all his misdeeds, also in coming after him in such a high-handed way. V. 37. **Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren that they may judge betwixt us both.** That the search, undertaken upon suspicion which amounted to a certainty, had yielded absolutely no results made Laban appear foolish in the eyes of both parties. V. 38. **This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.** V. 39. **That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.** Rather than go to Laban with a detailed report concerning every loss in the flocks, Jacob voluntarily filled all gaps. V. 40. **Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.** In the Orient, the intense cold of the night corresponds to the burning heat of the day, just as in the Southwest of our country. V. 41. **Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times.** As one commentator says: "The strong feeling and the lofty self-consciousness which utter themselves in his speech impart to it a rhythmical movement and poetic forms." V. 42. **Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac,** that is, the God whom Isaac feared, the object of his reverence or veneration, **had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.** The service of Jacob in the house of Laban is an example of true faithfulness, which is here throughout contrasted with the selfishness of the older man. A true believer will be diligent, faithful, conscientious, careful not to neglect or to waste aught of the goods entrusted to him, anxious to serve God and his neighbor with the work of his hands.

THE COVENANT ON MOUNT GILEAD. — V. 43. **And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine; and what can I do this day unto these my daughters or unto their children which they have born?** Although Laban still speaks with an unwarranted boastfulness, referring to his superior power and assuming rights which he no longer possessed, yet his words also show that Jacob's rebuke has had its effect. He realizes that any attempt against the life or well-being of Jacob would hurt also his children and grandchildren. At the same time the fear arises in him that Jacob might some day return to Mesopotamia at the head of a mighty band and avenge his wrong. V. 44. **Now, therefore, come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.** This proposal was largely an outgrowth of selfishness, but it served the purpose. V. 45. **And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar,** this stone being the monument of the settlement, of the peaceful separation, to which he assented. V. 46. **And Jacob said unto his brethren,** his kinsmen that had come with Laban, **Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap; and they did eat there upon the heap,** which designated the friendly communion. V. 47. **And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha; but Jacob called it Galeed,** both names, the first Chaldean, the other Hebrew, signifying the same: Heap of testimony, or witness. V. 48. **And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of**

it called Galeed; v. 49. **and Mizpah,** another name, which was later applied to the location on account of another remark by Laban; **for he said, The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another.** Mizpah, or Mizpeh, means watch-tower, for Jehovah was called upon to be the watchman, to watch carefully that all the terms of the agreement should be observed. V. 50. **If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.** The Lord, knowing what the stipulation included, would watch that none of its terms be violated. V. 51. **And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee;** v. 52. **this heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.** If either one should ever have thoughts of vengeance, his way into the country of the other would lead past this place, and the monument of stones would serve to remind him of the covenant. V. 53. **The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father,** that is, the God of Terah, **judge betwixt us.** Laban, the idolater, is rather indefinite in naming his god, though he tries to find common ground. **And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac,** by the God whom his father worshiped and whom he knew to be the only true God. V. 54. **Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount,** he killed animals for an offering to the true God, **and called his brethren to eat bread** and thus to seal the covenant with a common meal. **And they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.** V. 55. **And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them,** thus taking leave of them in a very tender manner, a contrast to his former harshness; **and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.** From the story of this covenant we learn that the believers, so far as it is possible without denying the truth, will try to have peace with all men, even with the unbelievers, which does not change the fact, however, that there is constant warfare on their part against sin.

CHAPTER 32.

Jacob at Mahanaim and Peniel.

The Messengers to Esau. — V. 1. **And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him,** literally, they came up with him, joined him. Their protection had shielded him on Mount Gilead, and the meeting with them at this time gave him the assurance of their further assistance. V. 2. **And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim** (double host). He thus commemorated in the name of the place where he was shown this vision the fact that the army of the Lord joined his own little band for the sake of protection. The camp of the angels may have been invisible to all eyes but his own, but he had received his encouragement nevertheless, and went his way with greater cheer. V. 3. **And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.** As Esau's family grew, he gradually loosened the bonds which tied him to the home of his parents, since he felt that he really had no part in the patriarchal blessing. He made the wilderness of Zin, with Mount Hor, his home, the level portion of which was known as the fields of Seir. V. 4. **And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now;** v. 5. **and I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants; and I have sent to tell my lord that I may find grace in thy sight.** This message with its humble, almost abject submissiveness was intended to conciliate Esau; it was purposely held like the report of a subordinate to his superior officer, otherwise the details may well have been omitted. V. 6. **And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.** The return of Jacob's messengers without a friendly greeting was intended by Esau to make an ominous impression. As a princely sheik of the desert he came with his retainers, his sons, his servants, and other adherents, with whose aid he was gradually driving out the Horites from the land of Seir. If nothing else, Esau wanted to have his brother feel his superior power, for this he valued more highly than the promise of a religious dominion in the dim and distant future. V. 7. **Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.** Rebekah, who had not been informed as to a change of mind in Esau, had not called her favorite son back, nor had Esau given any sign that he would now easily be reconciled. Even the believers still have their weak flesh to contend with, and this is very easily discouraged. **And he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;** v. 8. **and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.** This division of the entire caravan into two companies was a precaution intended to save at least one

half of his possessions. It shows that Jacob, although in an advanced state of panic, had not lost his natural cunning, overhasty and impatient though it was. The actual experience of danger often causes even firm Christians to forget their simple trust in the Lord's almighty power for a while.

JACOB'S PRAYER. — V. 9. **And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:** v. 10. **I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.** This was the proper reaction from the abject fear and panic with which Jacob had been suffering, carrying the matter to the true God in humble prayer. His prayer had the proper form, for he reminded God of His promises, at the same time declaring his own unworthiness so far as all the mercies and all the truth of the Lord were concerned, for his entire possessions twenty years before, when he crossed the Jordan near this point, had consisted of a staff, and now there were two bands of animals and of servants whom he was taking back to his home country. V. 11. **Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children,** literally, upon the children, since a mother will protect her children against the enemy with her body. The situation was so serious in the eyes of Jacob that he utterly despaired of all human help. V. 12. **And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.** Because an attack such as was now threatening him would tend to defeat the divine promise in the patriarchal blessing, therefore Jacob once more reminded the Lord of this promise, chap. 28, 14. Faith clings to the divine promises, and he that prays properly always refers the Lord to His own Word with its many assurances of mercy, blessing, help, and assistance.

THE PRESENTS TO ESAU. — V. 13. **And he lodged there that same night,** he encamped in that place for the night; **and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau, his brother;** v. 14. **two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams,** v. 15. **thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she-asses, and ten foals.** The prayer had calmed the excited mind of Jacob to such an extent that he now took measures, not to flee, but to meet Esau, and to overcome him with love. The selection and the apportionment of the animals showed Jacob's experience in cattle-raising, just as the arrangement of each small caravan indicated his wisdom, for he placed the smallest and least valuable animals first, and the more valuable in the rear. V. 16. **And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.** There was literally a breathing space between the various small bands as they traveled along, just enough room to make a new impression every time, and thus to increase the force, the effect of the offered present. V. 17. **And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau, my brother, meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? And whither goest thou? And whose are these before thee?** v. 18. **then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and, behold, also he is behind us.** The careful instruction of each servant as to the form of homage which he was to show to Esau, the repetition of the formula which called Jacob a servant and Esau lord, together with the offering of the presents all these were calculated to overcome Esau's anger gradually. V. 19. **And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau when ye find him.** V. 20. **And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us.** It was the cumulative effect of the atoning presents that Jacob counted on to make the impression on Esau, the humble mention of the servant Jacob being very effective as the climax. **For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.** Jacob called his presents gifts of atonement, for they were intended to cover the face of Esau so that he would no longer see the offense which Jacob had committed against him. Esau's mind being taken up by the presents, he would no longer think of Jacob's guilt, but would lift up his face in kindness and receive him with his favor. V. 21. **So went the present over before him; and himself lodged that night in the company.** Night travel was nothing unusual in the East, so Jacob sent the small bands of presents off to the south at once, probably before nightfall, while he himself remained in camp for a while. V. 22. **And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.** Jacob's anxiety did not permit him to rest very long. Before the night had advanced very far, he took the members of his family and transferred them to the south side of the Jabbok, at the ford which is about eighteen miles from the Jordan. V. 23. **And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.** So the tents

were struck, and the entire caravan was on its way toward the south. Thus Jacob had made all the necessary arrangements, had done what he could to appease his brother, and could await the outcome of his plans with a more confident heart. It is nothing but a matter of simple wisdom to agree with adversaries as soon as possible, to offer them the hand of reconciliation, to appease them with kindness.

The Struggle at Peniel. — V. 24. **And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day,** until the morning dawned and its brightness arose in the eastern sky. Jacob, having crossed first with his family, returned and sent over his herds in charge of the servants, while he himself remained on the north side of the brook. Suddenly there came upon him a nameless man, and the two engaged in a fierce wrestling-match. V. 25. **And when He saw that He prevailed not against him,** when the unknown man found that he could not overcome the determined resistance of Jacob, **He touched the hollow of his thigh,** the socket of the hip-joint. **And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.** His hip was sprained or paralyzed in consequence of the twisting in the struggle and the touch of the unknown man. V. 26. **And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.** In spite of the sprained hip Jacob persevered in his struggle with the man, of whose identity he became surer every moment. It was the Lord Himself, in human form, who here assumed the rôle of an antagonist to Jacob, and for that reason Jacob insisted upon having His blessing before permitting Him to depart. V. 27. **And He said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.** V. 28. **And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.** From the position of a mere Jacob, holder of the heel, in which capacity he had overcome his brother Esau, he was here advanced to that of Israel, God-wrestler, the captain, or prince, of God, because he had prevailed as a prince in his struggle with the Lord. Cp. Hos. 12, 4. 5. V. 29. **And Jacob asked Him and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name?** Cp. Judg. 13, 18. It is not for sinful man to know every name of the great Lord of heaven; besides, the Lord had already indicated His name. **And He blessed him there.** The Lord formally repeated the patriarchal blessing, chap. 28, 13—15, with its Messianic promise. V. 30. **And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel** (face of God); **for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.** So it was not only a bodily struggle, but a spiritual wrestling as well which Jacob was obliged to endure. But he stood the test, he persevered until he had received the Lord's blessing, until he saw the face of God turned to him in mercy, until his soul was healed of all its fear and terror. V. 31. **And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.** Just as he passed over and away from the place of the night's wrestling, the sun rose upon him, and with its rising the courage which now possessed his heart sent him forth cheerfully to meet his brother Esau. He had probably taken little notice of his injury in the course of the struggle, but now the sprain caused him to wince and to walk lame. V. 32. **Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.** Thus even in later years the Israelites commemorated the wonderful struggle of their ancestor in setting aside this part of the hip of animals as consecrated to the Lord. Special revelations of God's goodness and mercy deserve to be commemorated through the ages by those who have received the benefits following from such visitations.

CHAPTER 33.

The Reconciliation of Esau with Jacob.

Jacob's Meeting with Esau. — V. 1. **And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men.** Jacob had joined his caravan and continued his march. He no longer looked for the approach of Esau with anxious apprehension, but with cheerful expectation. **And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.** V. 2. **And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.** The division of the caravan was carefully planned. Jacob "himself, as the head of the family, as its protector and representative, takes the lead; then follow the handmaids with their children; then Leah with hers; and at last, Rachel with Joseph. This inverted order, by which the most loved came last, is not merely chosen from a careful and wise prudence, but at the same time the free expression of the place which they occupied in his affections." V. 3. **And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times,** in the Oriental manner, in which men stoop over forward until their forehead practically touches the ground, a sign of the

deepest reverence, **until he came near to his brother.** The sixfold repetition of the deep obeisance was a form of humiliation which indicated that he wanted to atone fully for any offense against his brother Esau, that he was willing to show him the utmost reverence. V. 4. **And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept.** If Esau had still been cherishing his old grudge when he left his home, this was now fully overcome and removed by the humility of his brother. His brotherly feeling took hold of him at this point, and in a spontaneous outburst of affection he embraced him and kissed him, whereupon these two gray-headed men, separated for a score of years, are overcome with joy and burst into weeping. In this moment Esau became a different man, who willingly bowed himself under the will of the Lord and showed truly noble traits of character. V. 5. **And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.** Jacob humbly expressed the gratitude of his heart in giving the Lord all honor for His blessings. V. 6. **Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.** V. 7. **And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves; and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.** They all followed the example of Jacob in his humble behavior toward Esau, thus doing their share in gaining the heart of Esau for Jacob. It is noted particularly that Joseph came near before his mother; he seems to have run ahead in childlike trustfulness in order to meet his uncle first. Altogether, the scene is a fine illustration of the ideal painted by the psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," Ps. 133, 1.

JACOB PRESSES HIS GIFTS UPON ESAU. — V. 8. **And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.** Jacob's answer to Esau's question as to the meaning of the train of small caravans which he had met is not an act of fawning servility, of cringing humility, but rather an expression by which he hoped to be restored fully to the favor of his brother, somewhat strongly accented, perhaps, after the Oriental manner. V. 9. **And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.** The kindness and courtesy of Esau are now apparent throughout: he addresses Jacob with the tender "my brother," he gently urges him to keep his unusually large gift, he states that he is provided with all that he needs. V. 10. **And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.** Although colored by Oriental courtesy, the words of Jacob were altogether sincere. He had found favor in the sight of Esau, in the friendly face of his brother he saw again the evidence of God's friendly watching over his life's path, all of which filled him with an intense joy. V. 11. **Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.** God's favor and goodness had blessed Jacob so richly that he had all he needed and to spare. **And he urged him, and he took it.** Thus the new bond of friendliness and brotherliness was strengthened. V. 12. **And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.** Here Esau offered to accompany Jacob's caravan in the rôle of protector. This offer was a proof of the genuineness of his reconciliation; he was anxious to have the relation between himself and Jacob restored to the intimacy of their youth and early manhood. V. 13. **And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.** V. 14. **Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant; and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir,** which he hoped to visit some day. The objections of Jacob to his brother's plan were well founded and backed up by his experience in handling cattle for many years. His intention to travel only as fast as the feet of the cattle were able to progress was based upon the fact that a single day's overdriving, with the attendant total exhaustion, would result in an entire loss. V. 15. **And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee,** set at thy disposal, **some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord.** So Jacob courteously, but firmly, refused even a small company of protecting Bedouins. There was no need of it, and therefore Jacob did not want to bother Esau nor put himself under heavy obligations to him. Jacob knew, for one thing, that the host of the Lord's angels was with him. But he also did not want to become too intimate with the people of Esau, who undoubtedly did not all share their leader's sentiments. Christians will try to live peaceably with all men, but they will always avoid an intimate union with such as are distinct from them in spiritual matters.

JACOB RETURNS TO CANAAN. — V. 16. **So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir,** in the valley of Zin, south of the Dead Sea, the country which he had selected for his home. V. 17. **And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made**

booths for his cattle; therefore the name of the place is called Succoth (booths). Jacob, from the neighborhood of Peniel, turned toward the Jordan, where he built a more permanent encampment, by erecting a house for himself and sheds, or booths, for his cattle. This place probably remained one of his stations for his rapidly growing herds and flocks. Cp. Josh. 13, 27; Judg. 8, 4. 5. V. 18. **And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.** After living at Succoth a number of years, until Dinah, his daughter, had become a young woman, during which time Jacob also made a visit to his aged father at Hebron and brought back the old nurse of his mother, Deborah, he finally entered Canaan proper with his family and at least some of his herds and flocks. He came into his home country in good health, as the Lord had promised him, and encamped before the city of Shechem, which the Hivite prince Hamor had built since the time of Abraham, calling it after the name of his son. V. 19. **And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, for an hundred pieces of money.** Jacob, trusting in the promises of the Lord and preparing for an even more permanent residence in Canaan than Abraham, bought a possession for himself during his lifetime. This piece of land, with the so-called Jacob's well, is shown to this day at the southeast opening of the valley of Shechem. Jacob paid for this land one hundred pieces of money, the value of which can no longer be determined. Some scholars think that each piece of money was worth as much as a lamb, while others are of the opinion that there was money in those days which, in a crude manner, had the figure of a lamb stamped upon it. V. 20. **And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe Israel** (God, the God of Israel). That was Jacob's confession after the many years of travel and sojourn in strange countries: The strong God is the God of Israel. He had experienced the mighty power of God in numerous instances, and was thankful for the days of peace and rest which he now enjoyed. For this reason also his worship, which he formally instituted at Shechem, consisted chiefly in proclaiming the name of this true God. In this all believers, who ever and again enjoy the rich blessings of the Lord in wonderful measure, will cheerfully imitate the aged patriarch.

CHAPTER 34.

The Rape of Dinah and Its Consequences.

Dinah Defiled. — V. 1. **And Dinah, the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.** Dinah had probably been born in the fourteenth year of Jacob's service in Mesopotamia. She was, like Simeon and Levi, who are so prominent in this story, a child of Jacob and Leah. About ten years had now elapsed since the family had come, first to Succoth and then to Shechem, and Dinah was a young woman, the girls in the Orient reaching maturity at an early age. Dissatisfied, perhaps, with the supposed curbing of her personal liberty in her father's house, Dinah went out to make the acquaintance of the Canaanitish girls and to visit with them. V. 2. **And when Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her,** humbled her by robbing her of her virginity. V. 3. **And his soul clave unto Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.** The fact that Shechem really loved Dinah and did not reject her after his sinful act places him in a somewhat better light, but it does not excuse him. To seek her love after deflowering her was not honorable. V. 4. **And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.** This attempt to atone for the sin by an honorable marriage was to the credit of Shechem, but it does not change the fact that he had seduced Dinah in the first place. Nor is Dinah wholly without fault. She knew that it was a dangerous thing for her to leave the protection of her father's encampment and to seek the friendship of the heathen women; and we are not told that she offered a determined resistance when Shechem seduced her. Her example, therefore, is written as an earnest warning to all Christian young women, especially such as feel the lure of the world and are tempted to yield to the lust of the flesh. V. 5. **And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah, his daughter,** for news of that kind usually travels quickly; **now his sons were with his cattle in the field; and Jacob held his peace until they were come.** Jacob did not act alone in this important matter, partly because the brothers of Dinah had a voice in all serious concerns relating to her, partly because he had to deal with the proud and insolent prince of the region, the old sheik's successor. That is usually the first consequence of a sin of this kind, to bring grief and anguish to the hearts of the parents.

Hamor's Proposal. — V. 6. **And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob to commune with him.** He left the city and went out to the camp of Jacob, to anticipate the indignation of Jacob's sons and to straighten out the matter peacefully. V. 7.

And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it. The bad news reached them also before the usual hour for returning from the field, and they acted with the impetuosity of youth. **And the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.** Even in those days, when the family of Jacob was still small, the act of Shechem was considered an insult to the entire tribe. The more the sons of Jacob therefore thought about it, the higher their anger mounted. The dignity of the entire posterity of Israel had been besmirched, and they felt that they could not bear the disgrace. V. 8. **And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter; I pray you give her him to wife.** Hamor seems to have felt that he was representing a very weak case, for his proposal impresses the reader as being made in great hesitation and embarrassment. He pleads the deep and serious attachment of his son for Dinah. V. 9. **And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.** V. 10. **And ye shall dwell with us; and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.** Hamor thus offered to Jacob and his sons the freedom of his little country, with the full rights of citizenship. They might do business anywhere and select any part of the country for their herds. V. 11. **And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes and what ye shall say unto me I will give.** V. 12. **Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife.** Thus Shechem added his personal plea to the proposal of his father, begging to be received into the family with favor and urging them to set their own price for the bride and to ask whatever bridal gifts they might choose. He may have been sincere enough according to his own lights, not realizing the fact that the family of the patriarch was the Lord's chosen people. A folly is easily committed, but its removal will often tax the efforts of a lifetime.

THE DEMAND OF JACOB'S SONS. — V. 13. **And the sons of Jacob,** who had a voice in the marriage of their sister, chap. 24, 50, **answered Shechem and Hamor, his father, deceitfully.** It was true enough that their acceptance of the proposal would never have agreed with the destiny of the chosen people of God; they would have sacrificed the Messianic promises for mere temporal gain, but the method which they adopted to carry out their purpose is inexcusable. **And said, because he had defiled Dinah, their sister;** v. 14. **and they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us.** That, in itself, may have been true enough that blood-relationship with such as were not Shemites was altogether undesirable, but to include this consideration in their plan of revenge was wrong. V. 15. **But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;** v. 16. **then will we give our daughters unto you and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.** V. 17. **But if ye will not hearken unto us to be circumcised, then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.** This proposal is to be condemned as hypocritical because the sons of Jacob must have known that the Israelites were not to blend with the Shechemites; it lacked sincerity. V. 18. **And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem, Hamor's son.** V. 19. **And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter; and he was more honorable than all the house of his father.** No matter what the motive had been in defiling Dinah, Shechem now was undoubtedly sincere, and he accepted the words of Jacob's sons at their face value. His position of power and influence was such as to give his words much weight, and he lost no time in carrying out his intention.

THE MEN OF SHECHEM AGREE TO THE DEMAND. — V. 20. **And Hamor and Shechem, his son, came unto the gate of their city,** the usual place for public meetings, **and communed with the men of their city, saying,** v. 21. **These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.** In suggesting to the men of the city that the Israelites be given the rights of full citizenship, together with permission to carry on the business of herdmen or of traders, Hamor and Shechem were careful to appeal very strongly to the self-interest of the Shechemites, knowing that their mission would thus have the best chances of success. V. 22. **Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.** This condition is inserted in the midst of the appeal, in order not to have it stand out so strongly. V. 23. **Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours?** Here the fact mentioned above that the land was wide before their hands and faces, affording enough room in every direction, is connected with the thought that the great wealth of the newcomers would also be at the disposal of the people of Shechem, through the marriages that would be consummated. **Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.**

V. 24. **And unto Hamor and unto Shechem, his son, hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.** The expression is repeated in order to show that there was no exception among all the men of Shechem. They accepted the rite all the more readily, since it was by no means unknown among Oriental nations. Thus the people of Shechem, heathen though they were, acted in good faith, just as the outward honesty of many an unbeliever in our days puts to shame those that confess the true God.

The Revenge of Simeon and Levi. — V. 25. **And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore,** when the men of Shechem were confined to their beds with the inflammation following the operation to which they had consented, **that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.** These two brothers of Dinah constituted themselves the avengers of their sister and carried out their design in such a shocking manner. The city was defenseless, all the inhabitants believing themselves secure. The boldness of Simeon and Levi, therefore, was nothing but treachery and bloodthirstiness. V. 26. **And they slew Hamor and Shechem, his son, with the edge of the sword,** in relentless fury, for against these two their anger was chiefly kindled, **and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.** Thus the first part of their plan of revenge was carried out. V. 27. **The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.** Simeon and Levi having returned to their father's camp with their sister, the other sons of Jacob were inflamed with the same fanatical hatred and plundered the city in the excess of their fury. V 28. **They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field,** v. 29. **and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.** It was a systematic and thorough pillage of the slain which was practised by the sons of Jacob, extending even to the innocent members of the murdered men's families. It was a revolting crime which the sons of Jacob committed. V. 30. **And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites.** Jacob performed his duty as father in rebuking his sons with great severity for their indefensible crime, telling them that they had probably brought disaster upon him in making him and his family to stink before the inhabitants of the country, that they would be considered an abomination in the sight of all men. **And I, being few in number,** being only a small band with all the men that belong to my household, **they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.** That this fear of Jacob was by no means groundless, is indicated in chap. 35, 5. The depth of Jacob's horror over the deed of his sons may be seen in the words of his last blessing, chap. 49, 5—7. Deeds of violence are just as reprehensible in the children of God as immodesty and immorality. V. 31. **And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?** In trying to excuse themselves, the sons of Jacob implied that men would generally have treated their sister as Shechem had done, and that they felt it to be their duty to revenge the wrong. But they passed over his offer of an atonement for his crime and their own terrible guilt. The fact that other men do wrong to us can never excuse our doing wrong in return.

CHAPTER 35.

Jacob's Journey to Bethel and Hebron.

Jacob Moves to Bethel. — V. 1. **And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau, thy brother.** Ten full years had now elapsed since Jacob had returned from Mesopotamia, and still he had not fulfilled the special vow of Bethel, chap. 28, 20—22. Cp. chap. 31, 13. Whether it had been a matter of precaution against a mingling with the Edomites or simply tardiness on Jacob's part, the Lord, at any rate, found it necessary to remind him of his vow, in which he had promised the erection of an altar unto God, who had appeared to him at Bethel. V. 2. **Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.** This was an act of repentance, since Jacob, up till now, had permitted Rachel to keep her father's idols, chap. 31, 32, and had not turned the hearts of the members of his household from idolatry. His order went forth that all the strange gods and everything that savored of superstition and idolatry be removed from their midst, that they should purify themselves, moreover, through religious washings and by a complete change of garments. V. 3. **And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.**

The journey was to be from the lowlands near Shechem southward to the mountainous country of what was later Northern Judea. Jacob openly confessed his debt to the Lord, who had answered him in the day of his trouble, when he fled before his brother Esau, and declared his intention of fulfilling his vow. V. 4. **And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.** Jacob's command was so strict that his wives and his servants readily gave up not only the images, the strange gods which they had retained till now, but also their earrings, which were used as amulets and for other superstitious purposes. Jacob laid aside all his weakness which had yielded such terrible fruits, and buried all the symbols of idolatry and spiritual death which were to be found in his entire household, including now also the Shechemite women and children. Only then is it possible to serve God in the Spirit and in truth, if we cleanse our hearts from all idolatry and from all love of creatures. V. 5. **And they journeyed; and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.** That they struck their tents and removed from the neighborhood of Shechem without interference on the part of the heathen inhabitants in the neighboring cities was due entirely to the divine protection. V. 6. **So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him.** Cp. chap. 28, 19. 22. V. 7. **And he built there an altar, and called the place El Bethel** (God of Bethel), **because there God appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother.** By thus instituting the worship of the true God Jacob paid his vow of some thirty years before, for he distinctly remembered the revelation of God at that time, which seems to have indicated also the plurality of persons in the Godhead. V. 8. **But Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak; and the name of it was called Allonbachuth** (oak of weeping). It seems that Rebekah had died and Jacob had persuaded Deborah to make her home with him and his children. The old faithful servant had endeared herself to all to such a degree that her death was keenly felt by the family. The oak below Bethel figures also in later history, Judg. 4, 5; 1 Sam. 16, 3. The story shows that the relation between masters and servants may well be one of cordial regard.

THE LORD BLESSES JACOB. — V. 9. **And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.** He did not merely speak to Jacob in a dream, but He revealed Himself to him in some visible form, now that Jacob had once more returned to that section of Canaan from which he had left for Mesopotamia. As Abraham had been blessed repeatedly, so the Lord here renewed His Messianic promise. V. 10. **And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and He called his name Israel.** Thus the Lord confirmed to Jacob what He had told him at Peniel, chap. 32, 28. It was a formal introduction to the blessing. V. 11. **And God said unto him, I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;** v. 12. **and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give this land.** It was God Almighty that was speaking to Jacob, He whose protection and guidance Jacob had so richly enjoyed during the last thirty years. It was the patriarchal blessing, including the Messianic promise, which was here transmitted, for it indicated that Israel according to the flesh would not alone be the possessor of the oracles of God, Rom. 3, 2, but that members of all nations would make up the sum total of the spiritual Israel, of the great assembly of nations whose God would be the Lord. The immediate guarantee of this eventual blessing would be the temporal blessing of the possession of Canaan, the heritage of the children of Israel. Cp. chap. 48, 3. 4. V. 13. **And God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.** V. 14. **And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.** Jacob not only set this place apart, consecrated it for the worship of the true God, but he also performed an act of worship by pouring out a libation to the Lord, this being the first instance in which the drink-offering is mentioned in the Bible. To commemorate this vision, to keep it in remembrance among his children, Jacob erected a stone for a monument. V. 15. **And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.** This was his confession of his trust in the Word and promise of God, which is the rod and the staff of all believers during their pilgrimage on earth.

THE DEATH OF RACHEL. — V. 16. **And they journeyed from Bethel,** since Jacob's vow was now fulfilled and his thanksgiving completed; **and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath,** they were still a certain distance from the town afterward known as Bethlehem, which they had probably tried to reach in time; **and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor,** the anguish and the throes of a hard birth were upon her. Her wish at the time of Joseph's birth was fulfilled, but, after a quiescent period of seventeen years, she suffered even unto death. V. 17. **And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not;**

thou shalt have this son also. That was intended as a word of comfort to Rachel, in the midst of her intense suffering, for it told her that her wish had been granted by the Lord. V. 18. **And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Benoni** (son of my pain); **but his father called him Benjamin** (son of the right hand, son of fortune or prosperity). The text plainly indicates a life of the soul after the death of the body. In spite of his grief over the death of his beloved wife, Jacob's joy over this son of his old age could not be suppressed. V. 19. **And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.** V. 20. **And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.** So the monument was still standing in the days when Moses wrote. It was a bitter cup of grief which Jacob had to quaff at the death of his wife, for even believers feel the sting of death.

Jacob at Edar and Hebron. — V. 21. **And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.** He struck his tent, and he pitched his tent: the usual way of describing a nomadic form of life. This was south of Bethlehem, and the tower of the flocks was built for their protection, in a region eminently suited for pasturage. V. 22. **And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine; and Israel heard it.** Bilhah was Rachel's hand-maid, but nevertheless Jacob's concubine; hence Reuben's sin was that of incest, not to speak of an utter lack of filial reverence. The matter was brought to the attention of the father, and although Jacob did not act at once, the punishment was eventually forthcoming, for the sin cost Reuben his birthright, chap. 49, 4. **Now the sons of Israel were twelve:** v. 23. **the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun;** v. 24. **the sons of Rachel: Joseph, and Benjamin;** v. 25. **and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid: Dan, and Naphtali;** v. 26. **and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid: Gad and Asher; these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.** Cp. chap. 29, 32—30, 25. Benjamin is enumerated with the other sons of Jacob for the sake of completeness, although he was not born in Padanaram, yet before Jacob's actual return to the home of his father. Jacob was now formally to enter upon his inheritance, and therefore his sons are mentioned by name, as the fathers of the people of Israel. V. 27. **And Jacob came unto Isaac, his father, unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.** As Abraham had made the grove of terebinths which belonged to the Amorite Mamre his headquarters, so Isaac spent a large share of his life there, near Hebron or Kirjath-arba. V. 28. **And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.** V. 29. **And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.** Isaac was thus also added to his people, his soul entered the realm of the perfected saints in heaven, to be joined with his body in the resurrection of the dead. The notice of Isaac's death is here inserted in order to conclude his history, although, as a matter of fact, he lived about thirteen years longer. "Jacob was born in the sixtieth year of Isaac's life, and was thus one hundred and twenty years old when Isaac died. But when he was presented to Pharaoh in Egypt, he was one hundred and thirty years old. Of this time there were seven fruitful and two unfruitful years since Joseph's exaltation in Egypt, and thirteen years betwen the selling of Joseph and his exaltation, for he was sold when seventeen, and was thirty when he was raised to honor and power. Hence we must take twenty-three years from the one hundred and thirty years of Jacob to determine his age at the time Joseph was sold; which is thus one hundred and seven. Isaac, therefore, shared the grief of Jacob over the loss of his son for thirteen years." (Lange.)

CHAPTER 36.

Esau's Family Record.

Esau Settles in Seir. — V. 1. **Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom.** V. 2. **Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan: Adah, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite, and Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, the Hivite,** chap. 26, 34; v. 3. **and Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth,** chap. 28, 9. It was just as common for a woman to have several names as for a man, it being customary to change the names at some important event in life. Although there are apparent discrepancies in the entire chapter, they involve no contradiction. V. 4. **And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz,** 1 Chron. 1, 35; **and Bashemath bare Reuel,** 1 Chron. 1, 35; v. 5. **and Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah; these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan,** before his removal to the country in the neighborhood of Mount Hor. V. 6. **And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, all the servants of his household, and his cattle, and all his beasts,**

and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country (of Seir) **from the face of his brother Jacob.** Esau had, even before this, made an expedition into the country of the Horites for the purpose of conquest, chap. 32, 3, and he now definitely removed to Seir with his entire establishment. He knew that the domain of Canaan belonged to Jacob, and it was clear, moreover, that the flocks of the brothers had grown so large as to prohibit their dwelling together. V. 7. **For their riches,** especially in herds and flocks, **were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle.** The story of Abraham and Lot might thus have been repeated, and this was not Esau's intention, since he was at peace with his brother. V. 8. **Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir; Esau is Edom.** Idumea, with the mountain range known as Seir, whose highest peak was Mount Hor, was between the Dead Sea and the Aelanitic Gulf.

ESAU'S SONS AND GRANDSONS. — V. 9. **And these are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir:** v. 10. **These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Adah, the wife of Esau; Reuel, the son of Bashemath, the wife of Esau.** V. 11. **And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho** (or Zephi, 1 Chron. 1, 36), **and Gatam, and Kenaz.** V. 12. **And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son,** having probably been adopted for that purpose by Adah; **and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek; these were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.** If this is the Amalek that was the ancestor of the Amalekites who afterward were such bitter enemies of the children of Israel, it was probably due to the fact that Amalek separated himself from his brethren at an early date and grew into an independent people, his descendants occupying the country immediately south of Canaan and spreading from there to the very boundaries of the Promised Land. V. 13. **And these are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah; these were the sons of Bashemath, Esau's wife.** V. 14. **And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife; and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.** In the case of Aholibamah, therefore, the sons, in the case of the other wives, the grandsons perpetuated the name of Edom and were considered the fathers of the tribes. The sons of Eliphaz continued the Canaanitic line, those of Reuel the Ishmaelitic, and the three sons of Aholibamah the Horite line.

THE DUKES OF THE HOUSE OF ESAU. — V. 15. **These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz, the first-born son of Esau: Duke Teman, Duke Omar, Duke Zepho, Duke Kenaz,** v. 16. **Duke Korah, Duke Gatam, and Duke Amalek; these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah.** Fully half the Edomite princes were thus the descendants of Adah, the Hivite, or, in a wider sense, the Hittite woman. V. 17. **And these are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Duke Nahath, Duke Zerah, Duke Shammah, Duke Mizzah; these are the dukes that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Bashemath, Esau's wife,** in whose descendants the strains of Ishmael and of Esau were mingled. V. 18. **And these are the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Duke Jeush, Duke Jaalam, Duke Korah; these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.** V. 19. **These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their dukes.** The descendants of these desert princes established themselves geographically within more or less fixed limits as bands or tribes.

THE HORITES. — V. 20. **These are the sons of Seir, the Horite, who inhabited the land; after him the country was named, and with his descendants those of Edom mingled: Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah** (this name being both masculine and feminine), v. 21. **and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan; these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir, in the land of Edom.** The Horites, or descendants of Seir, the original inhabitants of the wilderness of Zin, were cave-dwellers and shared the many caves in that country with their herds and flocks. V. 22. **And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam** (or Homam, 1 Chron. 1, 39); **and Lotan's sister was Timna.** V. 23. **And the children of Shobal were these: Alvan** (or. Alian, 1 Chron. 1, 40), **and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho** (or Shephi, 1 Chron. 1, 40), **and Onam.** V. 24. **And these are the children of Zibeon: both Ajah, and Anah; this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon, his father.** While he had charge of his father's asses in the wilderness, he discovered some warm springs, a number of which are found in that country to this day. V. 25. **And the children of Anah were these: Dishon, and Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah.** V. 26. **And these are the children of Dishon: Hemdan** (or Amram, 1 Chron. 1, 41), **and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.** V. 27. **The children of Ezer are these: Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan** (or Jakan, 1 Chron. 1, 42). V. 28. **The children of Dishan are these: Uz, and Aran.** V. 29. **These are the dukes that came of the Horites: Duke Lotan, Duke Shobal, Duke Zibeon, Duke Anah,** v. 30. **Duke Dishon, Duke Ezer, Duke Dishan; these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the**

land of Seir. These were all descendants of Seir, the Horite, as they were divided and called after their individual princes.

The Kings of Edom. — V. 31. **And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel,** up to the time that the children of Israel began the conquest of Canaan, for it was at that time that Moses wrote this account. V. 32. **And Bela, the son of Beor, reigned in Edom; and the name of his city was Dinhabah.** V. 33. **And Bela died, and Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his stead.** This city was very important, being considered one of the capitals of the Edomites, Is. 34, 6; 63, 1. V. 34. **And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead.** This land, according to Jerome, was a region in Southern Idumea, not far from the city of Petra. V. 35. **And Husham died, and Hadad, the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Avith.** At his time the kingdom must have been very powerful. V. 36. **And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.** V. 37. **And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.** This may indicate that Saul was a stranger from the Euphrates, but it is more probable that Rehoboth was a city on the Zered, which flows into the Dead Sea. V. 38. **And Saul died, and Baalhanan, the son of Achbor, reigned in his stead.** V. 39. **And Baalhanan, the son of Achbor, died, and Hadar reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.** Since the relatives of Hadar are noted so carefully and his death is not mentioned, he seems to have been king at the time of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness. It was Hadar, then, who refused the children of Israel passage through his land, Num. 20, 14—21. It appears from the list of kings that the monarchy in Edom was limited and that it was not hereditary, but elective, the tribal princes very likely choosing a king out of their midst whenever a vacancy occurred. V. 40. **And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names: Duke Timnah, Duke Alvah, Duke Jetheth,** v. 41. **Duke Aholibamah, Duke Elah, Duke Pinon,** v. 42. **Duke Kenaz, Duke Teman, Duke Mibzar,** v. 43. **Duke Magdiel, Duke Iram; these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession; he is Esau, the father of the Edomites.** This list gives the geographical position of the original personal tribe-princes, for it was a hereditary aristocracy that obtained in the land of Edom, and the princes formed the electoral college whenever a new king was to be chosen. The history of Esau is herewith brought to an end.

CHAPTER 37.

Joseph Sold by His Brethren.

Joseph Hated by His Brothers. — V. 1. **And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.** He had now entered upon the inheritance of his father, he was the bearer of the patriarchal blessing; although a stranger in the land of Canaan, he knew that eventually the entire country would belong to his children. V. 2. **These are the generations of Jacob;** the remainder of the book is devoted to the history of Jacob and his family. **Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren;** having reached this age, he was considered strong enough to serve, with the rest, as a shepherd-boy. **And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives,** since the sons of his mother's hand-maid and those of Leah's servant stood nearer to him than the sons of Leah. **And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.** He was not an idle, conceited tale-bearer, but he did his duty in informing his father when evil reports concerning his brothers became persistent, when they had given offense to him and to others by their wickedness. V. 3. **Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age.** With the exception of Benjamin, who was then still in his infancy, Joseph had been his last son, and Rachel's son at that. **And he made him a coat of many colors,** a fine tunic, or mantel-like garment, with long sleeves, such as was worn by rich people and members of the nobility. V. 4. **And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.** They believed that Jacob's preference for Joseph indicated that the right of the first-born was to be conferred upon him. As a result, their envy and hatred grew to the point that they were no longer able to greet him kindly nor to talk with him frankly and peaceably. Envy very often grows into hatred and results in manifold sins.

The Dreams of Joseph. — V. 5. **And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren; and they hated him yet the more.** Joseph, not realizing the situation in its full gravity, told his dream with boyish eagerness and frankness, the result being, however, that he poured oil upon the flames of the hatred against him. V. 6. **And he said unto them,**

Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. V. 7. **For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.** As Isaac had tilled the soil in addition to grazing his herds and flocks, chap. 26, 12, so Jacob had at least some land under cultivation, and Joseph was familiar with the work, having been called upon to assist his brothers in binding the loose grain-stalks into sheaves, or bundles. The interpretation of his dream was obvious, namely, that he would be exalted above his brothers. V. 8. **And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us, or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us,** lord it over us as king? **And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.** They added to their hatred of him, partly on account of the dream itself, which made them feel uneasy, partly because he told them of it. V. 9. **And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more: And, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.** Here Joseph was also entirely ingenuous, being half puzzled and half delighted, since the repetition of the same idea in the dream made its fulfilment probable. V. 10. **And he told it to his father and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother,** either Bilhah or Leah, **and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?** There is a note of uneasiness in Jacob's stern reproof, as if he could not quite persuade himself that the dream was merely the result of a false ambition. V. 11. **And his brethren envied him;** they continued their attitude of hateful aloofness; **but his father observed the saying,** he kept and remembered the words, recalling them, probably, when he was told of Joseph's remarkable elevation some twenty-two years later. It was nothing unusual in those days for the Lord to make known His plans by means of dreams, and He often provided reliable interpreters as well. It is foolish for people in our days to set up arbitrary explanations of dreams.

JOSEPH SENT TO SHECHEM. — V. 12. **And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.** In taking care of the immense herds and flocks of their father, they were obliged to roam far and wide over the country, Shechem being one of their stations. V. 13. **And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.** It may be that Jacob was filled with anxiety on account of the fact that his sons had so boldly returned to the scene of the recent slaughter. V. 14. **And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren and well with the flocks; and bring me word again.** To inform himself of the well-being of his brothers and of that of the flocks, that was the errand of Joseph, and it speaks well for his obedience that he offered no objection, but declared his willingness at once. **So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem,** which was about two days' journey from Hebron. V. 15. **And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field,** having missed the right road. **And the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?** V. 16. **And he said, I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.** If Joseph had not lost his way, he would have gotten his information at Shechem; as it is, he is obliged to appeal to the stranger. V. 17. **And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan,** which is a town about fourteen miles north of Shechem, toward the Plain of Jezreel. **And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan,** that is, at Dothan, near the town, where there was good pasture for their cattle. If Joseph left the neighborhood of Shechem on the morning of the third day, he may have reached Dothan about noon. V. 18. **And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.** They recognized Joseph even from a distance by the hated coat which he wore, and it was the sentiment of the majority that this would be a fine opportunity to get rid of him. It was a plan conceived in falsehood and deceit, and, to all intents and purposes, it made them murderers before God. V. 19. **And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh,** literally, This master of dreams is coming. V. 20. **Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.** The cold-blooded manner of their planning shows the intensity of their hatred: to kill Joseph first, and then to remove all evidence of their crime by throwing his body in some cistern in the wilderness. Their words indicate, nevertheless, that they could not throw off a feeling of apprehension as to the outcome, should the dreams of Joseph be fulfilled. V. 21. **And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, Let us not kill him.** V. 22. **And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.** Reuben here almost redeems himself for the crime which he committed against his father. For although he, for the sake of the success of his plan, had to express

himself in such a way as to lead his brothers to infer that he was willing to let Joseph die in the cistern, it was the only way to gain their consent. He hoped to find ways and means afterwards of saving Joseph's life, and of restoring him to his father. If Reuben had not yet fully repented of his great sin and was still morally weak, he at least showed evidence of a change.

JOSEPH SOLD TO THE ISHMAELITES. — V. 23. **And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him,** the fine long-sleeved tunic which his father had procured for him; v. 24. **and they took him, and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.** So Reuben's suggestion prevailed, and Joseph was thrown into the empty cistern, although his cries for mercy rang in the ears of his brothers for many long years afterward, chap. 41, 21. V. 25. **And they sat down to eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.** In the century and a half since Midian, the son of Keturah, and Ishmael had been dismissed from the house of Abraham, their descendants must have become a tribe of some number. The Midianites and the Ishmaelites were largely engaged in trading, the present caravan being loaded with gum-tragacanth of Syria, with terebinth-balm of Gilead, and with the fragrant gum of the cistus-rose found throughout Arabia. The merchants had crossed the Jordan near what was afterwards Beth-Shean and were following the caravan road through the plain of Tell-Dothan to Ramleh and then down to Egypt, where they hoped to dispose of their merchandise. V. 26. **And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?** Judah also did not have the courage to oppose his brothers outright, although the idea of murdering his brother was abhorrent to him. His argument was that they would have no benefit out of it if they would simply put Joseph to death. V. 27. **Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.** The daring plan of Judah appealed to them, now that the first flare of their hatred had died down. Their consciences would not be burdened with a murder, and they would, in addition, have the slave-money for their profit. V. 28. **Then there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt,** passing within twenty miles of his father's home to do so. Twenty pieces, or shekels, of silver was the price of a slave-boy, as fixed in the laws of Moses, Lev. 27, 5, well over ten dollars in American money. So the sons of Jacob, as they thought, had their revenge, and Judah thought he had salved his conscience. Such is the progress of sin.

JACOB'S GRIEF OVER JOSEPH. — V. 29. **And Reuben returned unto the pit.** The brothers had taken advantage of his absence to carry out Judah's plan. **And, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes** in deep grief and sorrow. V. 30. **And he returned unto his brethren and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?** He felt that his father would hold him, as the oldest, responsible for the welfare of Joseph. V. 31. **And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;** v. 32. **and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said, This have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.** In this way the brothers answered the cry of Reuben. The fine coat of Joseph, the object of their jealousy and their wrath, they soaked in the blood of a young goat and then delivered it to their father with a heartless notice. Thus one transgression gave birth to another, and the hearts of the sons were estranged from their father. V. 33. **And he knew it and said, It is my son's coat.** Love sharpened Jacob's eyesight so that he had no difficulty in recognizing the coat. **An evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces:** torn, torn to pieces is Joseph. Thus the father was misled by the deception of his sons, reaching the conclusion which they had intended. V. 34. **And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.** He continued to wear the garment of deepest mourning for a long time. V. 35. **And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him.** A poor enough effort it must have been on the part of the guilty sons, unless they were absolutely callous by this time. **But he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave,** into the realm of death, **unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.** He saw only the dark night of death and mourning before him. V. 36, **And the Midianites sold him** (Joseph) **into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard.** As a slave he was sold to this eunuch, or officer, of the Egyptian king, who was the commander or captain of Pharaoh's body-guard, and incidentally the head-executioner. Joseph is a type of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the heavenly Father, sent down from heaven for the welfare of His brethren on earth. He also was sold for a few pieces of silver and subjected to every form of indignity. But in all these things, God's gracious counsel of salvation was carried out.

CHAPTER 38.

Judah's Marriage and Sin.

THE STORY OF JUDAH, SHUAH, AND TAMAR. — V. 1. **And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.** After the episode with Joseph, Judah separated himself from his brothers and moved down from Hebron, which is in a mountainous region, toward the southeastern plains, pitching his tent near the town of Adullam and entering into friendly relations with a man by the name of Hirah. V. 2. **And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.** He married a Canaanite woman and entered into the most intimate relations with the heathen. V. 3. **And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er.** V. 4. **And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.** It was the father, then, who named his first-born son, while the mother selected the name for the second. V. 5. **And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah; and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.** The older sons may thus have been born at Adullam, a city of some importance in later times, Josh. 12, 15; 15, 35; 2 Chron. 11, 7; Micah 1, 15. Chezib, where Judah was tenting at the time of Shelah's birth, Josh. 15, 44; Micah 1, 14, was in the southern part of what was afterward the Plain of Judah. Apparently there was not much difference in the age of the three sons, for the entire story, as here related, took place between the incident at Dothan and the removal of Jacob to Egypt, a period of about twenty-three years. V. 6. **And Judah took a wife for Er, his first-born, whose name was Tamar,** apparently also a Canaanite. V. 7. **And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him.** If Judah had intended to curb the wickedness of his oldest son by an early marriage, he was disappointed; Jehovah punished Er with an early death. V. 8. **And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.** This custom of marriage between a man and the widow of his brother, known as the levirate, was afterward definitely fixed by the Lord, Deut. 25, 5. It was understood that the family of the older son should thereby be established. V. 9. **And Onan knew that the seed should not be his,** that a possible first-born son would not perpetuate his name and family, but that of his brother Er; **and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.** Rather than yield to the custom and be obedient to his father, Onan committed this crime against the divine institution of marriage and its purpose according to the will of God. Such works of the flesh, all too prevalent in our day, when children are no longer desired, are an abomination before the Lord. Where the fear of God still rules, such vices will not be tolerated. V. 10. **And the thing which he did displeased the Lord,** was evil in His eyes; **wherefore He slew him also.** V. 11. **Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow at thy father's house,** where widows returned in case there were no adult children to take care of them, **till Shelah, my son, be grown.** Evidently he did not want the third son to be married so early; **for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did.** Whether this was due to a superstition which regarded Tamar as an unlucky wife or simply to fatherly anxiety in behalf of his only remaining son, cannot be determined. **And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.** She was perfectly willing to do as Judah had suggested; she gave him the deference which the Fourth Commandment requires also from adult children.

JUDAH BECOMES GUILTY OF INCEST. — V. 12. **And in process of time,** after many days had elapsed, after some years, **the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted,** after the usual period of mourning, **and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnath,** not the town in the Philistine plain, but that in the mountains of Judah, **he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite.** The occasion of the shearing of the sheep was always a great festival for the shepherds, and Judah, after the days of mourning for his wife, was able to attend. V. 13. **And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.** She received the information simply in the manner in which a piece of news is passed on. V. 14. **And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself,** completely muffled and disguised both her face and her form, after the manner of the public harlots, or prostitutes, **and sat in an open place,** in the gate of Enajim or Enam, a town in the plain of Judah, Josh. 15, 34, **which is by the way of Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.** Although her plan and object seems revolting, it was not mere lust which drove her to this step, but a feeling of unjust treatment and the fear of lasting barrenness and mourning widowhood. V. 15. **When Judah saw her,** upon his return from the festivities at Timnath, **he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face,** after the custom of such women. V. 16. **And he turned unto her by the way,** turned aside from the road, **and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-**

law). And she said, What wilt thou give me that thou mayest come in unto me? V. 17. **And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge till thou send it?** V. 18. **And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand.** Tamar had thus made her plans with full attention to detail; she had a special reason for demanding Judah's seal-ring with its cord and the staff which he carried with him wherever he went, as badges of his dignity, by which he could definitely be identified. **And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him,** through the sin of incest. V. 19. **And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.** Her object being accomplished, she immediately returned to her father's house. V. 20. **And Judah sent the kid** which he had promised to the supposed harlot **by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand; but he found her not.** V. 21. **Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot that was openly by the wayside?** Judah had told him that the harlot had sat in the gate of Enayim, and Hirah, accommodating himself to the custom of the country, asked for the devotee of the goddess Astarte, the goddess of love, for to her certain Canaanite women sacrificed their bodies by a life of shame. **And they said, There was no harlot in this place.** Tamar had arranged it so that her presence in the gate of the town had not been noticed by the inhabitants. V. 22. **And he returned to Judah and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said that there was no harlot in this place.** This report caused Judah some chagrin. V. 23. **And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed; behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.** Judah feared that any further search for the woman would bring him, not moral condemnation, but mocking ridicule. It was characteristic of the times that he did not feel guilty, but expressed his satisfaction over the fact that she had his pledges, which were worth more than the kid. It is only by keeping the revolting aspect of sins and vices before the eyes all the time that we escape becoming callous with regard to them.

THE CHILDREN OF TAMAR. — V. 24. **And it came to pass about three months after that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.** Tamar was not only the widow of two of Judah's sons, but the promised wife of the third. "In his patriarchal authority he commanded her to be brought forth to be burned. Tamar was regarded as betrothed, and was, therefore, to be punished as a bride convicted of unchastity. But in this case the Mosaic Law imposes only the penalty of being stoned to death, Deut. 22, 20, whilst burning to death was inflicted only upon the daughter of a priest, and upon carnal intercourse both with mother and daughter, Lev. 21, 19; 20, 14. Judah's sentence, therefore, is more severe than that of the future Law." (Keil.) V. 25. **When she was brought forth** for execution, **she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man whose these are am I with child; and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff,** the signet-ring with its cord and the staff with its peculiar carved work. V. 26. **And Judah acknowledged them,** he could not help but recognize them, **and said, She hath been more righteous than I, because that I gave her not to Shelah, my son.** That was the result of his not having kept his word to Tamar: deceit, harlotry, incest. By managing to obtain children from Judah himself, Tamar had become guilty of a great sin, but her guilt was smaller than that of Judah. **And he knew her again no more;** it was a lesson for him to conquer the desires of his flesh and to struggle against sin in every form with greater earnestness. V. 27. **And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.** V. 28. **And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand,** due to an abnormal position; **and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.** She thought this would be the first-born. V. 29. **And it came to pass as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out; and she said, How hast thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee; therefore his name was called Pharez** (breach). The midwife's cry of vexation: Why didst thou make a breach in thy interest; upon thee be the breach! was thus retained in the name of the son. V. 30. **And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah** (rising), because he wanted to appear first. The entire story of Tamar, with all the attendant sins, is here told because Pharez, the son of harlotry, became one of the ancestors of Christ, whose suffering and death atoned also for these sins of His forefathers, whose perfect righteousness covers the sin and shame of all men. Cp. Matt. 1, 3.

CHAPTER 39.

Joseph's Chastity.

JOSEPH FINDS FAVOR WITH POTIPHAR. — V. 1. **And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.** The statement of chap. 37, 36 is here repeated, since the story of Joseph is now resumed. He was sold as a slave to Potiphar, the chief officer of Pharaoh's body-guard, and incidentally the chief executioner. V. 2. **And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.** Joseph, in his duties as one of the house-slaves of Potiphar, was faithful, and therefore enjoyed the favor and the assistance of the Lord: signal good fortune attended all his work. V. 3. **And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.** It did not take long for Potiphar to notice that the rapid increase in his prosperity was to be ascribed to Joseph and to the blessing of the Lord upon the latter's faithfulness. Good fortune attended everything to which Joseph turned his hand. V. 4. **And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.** Naturally, the fact of his increasing prosperity caused Potiphar to look with favor upon his new slave, who was always willing and faithful in his service, and so the master entrusted to him the oversight over his entire establishment, which probably included the management of an extensive estate. V. 5. **And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field.** Not only did Joseph show splendid executive ability, but it is emphatically stated that the blessing of God attended his work, and that Potiphar was blessed by the Lord on account of Joseph. Many a city and country has been blessed by God because of the believers, whose very presence served as a salt and whose prayers kept up the communication with the heavenly Father. V. 6a. **And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat.** So absolute was Potiphar's confidence in Joseph that he placed into his hands his entire business and did not concern himself with any part of its management. He was only interested in, and concerned about, his food, about his meals. This was not mere Oriental indolence, but also a good share of Oriental wisdom, for the more he left Joseph to his own devices, the better off he was, the wealthier he became.

JOSEPH FLEES FROM TEMPTATION. — V. 6b. **And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored.** He was a handsome young man, and well proportioned, well built. V. 7. **And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.** With lustful persuasions, continued for some time, she tried to lead him to commit fornication. V. 8. **But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth** (knoweth) **not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;** v. 9. **there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife; how, then, can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?** Joseph gave three reasons why he was obliged to be disobedient to his master's wife: It would have been a disgraceful abuse of the confidence placed in him by his master; it would have been an outrage upon Potiphar's rights as a husband; it would have been adultery, a great crime in the sight of God. It is the thought of God, the fear of the Lord, the consciousness that nothing is hidden from His knowledge, that aids in fighting temptations of every kind. V. 10. **And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her to lie by her or to be with her.** He resolutely turned his face from the temptation, he arranged his work so that he was never alone with her, all of which meant a continual battle with his own flesh and blood. V. 11. **And it came to pass about this time that Joseph went into the house to do his business,** a day came when he came to the house to attend to his work; **and there was none of the men of the house there within.** It was probably by her arrangement that all the servants were absent at that time. V. 12. **And she caught him by his garment,** she took a firm hold of his outer garment, **saying, Lie with me;** she wanted to take by force what she could not obtain by her lustful suggestions. **And he left the garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.** He preferred flight with the loss of his dress and of his good name to the loss of his chastity. So far as youthful lusts are concerned, there is only one way of dealing with them properly, namely, by fleeing from them, by fleeing fornication and every form of uncleanness. For it is here that no person dare to put too much confidence in himself.

JOSEPH ACCUSED AND IMPRISONED. — V. 13. **And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,** v. 14. **that she called unto**

the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us. The lust of Potiphar's wife was changed to hatred. Since she did not succeed in having her will, she determined to have her revenge. Although her attack on Joseph had taken place in a part of the house which was open to all, and not in the intimacy of her own room, yet the fact that she had Joseph's outer garment in her hand must serve as an accusation against him. For with well-simulated scorn she refers to her husband as having brought in this Hebrew, this outcast of a nomadic nation, for the purpose of exercising wanton mockery, not only against her, but against the virtue of all the women in the house. She accuses Joseph of behaving himself in a manner which would indeed have been legitimate in the case of a husband toward his wife, chap. 26, 8, but which was nothing more than a pretended seduction in her case. **He came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice;** v. 15. **and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.** She told her lie so skilfully that she even took care to state that Joseph had left his garment "at her side" instead of "in her hand," for the latter expression might have betrayed her. V. 16. **And she laid up his garment by her until his lord came home.** V. 17. **And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us came in unto me to mock me;** v. 18. **and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.** She could simulate outraged, innocent womanhood all the more easily since she knew that a slave could not testify for himself. In her boldness she almost reproaches Potiphar with having purposely endangered her chastity. V. 19. **And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.** Whether he suspected the true state of affairs to some extent or not, there was only one course open to the angry husband. V. 20. **And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison.** The innocent young man was confined in the state prison, where the prisoners of the king, the criminals against the state, were kept. Thus many an innocent Christian has been obliged to suffer wrongfully, to be suspected and accused of crimes of various kinds. In spite of all that, however, the believers place their trust in the mercy of God. V. 21. **But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.** The hearts of men are in the hands of the Lord, and He can guide them like rivers of water. It was the mercy of the Lord which secured for Joseph the favor of the jailer, himself an officer under Potiphar. V. 22. **And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.** Although Joseph himself was a prisoner, the jailer's trust in him was so great that he gave him charge of all the prisoners and of all the work which the prisoners had to perform. V. 23. **The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand,** with regard to all things which were expected of him he placed implicit confidence in Joseph; **because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.** With a clear conscience and the Lord's favor on their side, the believers are able to endure not only false accusations, but even worse tribulations, the loss of liberty and of life.

CHAPTER 40.

Pharaoh's Butler and Baker in Prison.

The Dreams of the Two Prisoners. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after these things that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord, the king of Egypt.** Joseph was in prison a number of years, since he was only seventeen at the time of his involuntary trip to Egypt and thirty at the time of his release. But while he was still a prisoner, although one with unusual privileges, the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh were cast into the state prison for some offense against the king. V. 2. **And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers and against the chief of the bakers.** V. 3. **And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.** They were committed to the care of Potiphar, the chief officer of Pharaoh's body-guard, who was incidentally the chief executioner, and Potiphar promptly had them transferred to the prison, in charge of the king's jailer. V. 4. **And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.** Since the prisoners were men of distinction, Potiphar personally arranged for both their safe-keeping and comfort and once more showed favor to Joseph by giving them into his special charge and making him their attendant. V. 5. **And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man accord-**

ing to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. It was in the same night that both men dreamed, each one a different dream with a special significance, both as to the incident upon which it was founded and as to the interpretation which it received. V. 6. **And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.** It was not the mere curiosity of the privileged servant that caused Joseph to take note of their attitude, but a real, kindly sympathy. V. 7. **And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?** Uneasy forebodings had stamped their faces with a look of worry and ill-humor. V. 8. **And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.** The interpretation of dreams, which were in those days considered omens for good or evil, was in the hands of a special class of men who derived profit from their work. The prisoners were unable to consult such a person with regard to their dreams, and that worried them, made them sullen. **And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you.** He reminded them of the fact that God, who sends significant dreams, is the only one that can furnish authentic interpretations; but he intimated, at the same time, that the gift of interpretation might be found with him, for he must have known that the Lord revealed things to him in this manner. Christians will neither attach an undue significance to dreams, nor will they ridicule the idea that God, even now, may reveal matters to men in this manner.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAMS. — V. 9. **And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me;** v. 10. **and in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes;** v. 11. **and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.** It was a very vivid dream, one in which events ordinarily of long duration were pressed together into the space of a few moments. The grapevine was before the butler, its three branches grew, it seemed that the blossoms budded forth, that they ripened into berries, into grapes. And, the cup belonging to the king being in his hand, he immediately pressed out the grapes and offered the cup with the juice to the king, thus performing the work which he had always been doing. V. 12. **And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days;** v. 13. **yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place; and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.** God revealed this interpretation to Joseph, and the latter told it in just that way. Pharaoh would lift up the head of the butler out of the disgrace of his imprisonment, have him fetched from prison, grant him the former prosperity and honor, and give him back his former office. V. 14. **But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house;** v. 15. **for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.** Joseph's plea may well be understood, when he asks the butler to keep him in favorable memory. He explains that he did not flee from his home country on account of some crime, but that he had been abducted by force. The expression shields his brothers, so far as their share in his present plight was concerned, and is altogether consistent, for Joseph undoubtedly informed the Ishmaelites that bought him of his station. He speaks with the same caution in referring to his imprisonment, merely stating that he was guilty of no crime which would have merited his being placed into this pit. V. 16. **When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head,** three baskets with white bread; v. 17. **and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh,** fine things to eat of bakery goods; **and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.** In his eagerness to obtain a favorable interpretation for himself, the chief baker overlooked the significant difference in the end of the dream. V. 18. **And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days;** v. 19. **yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.** In this one point there was the great distinction between the two dreams: it was not Pharaoh that took bread or fine pastry from the hand of the baker, but the birds seized upon his bakery-ware. He was to be put to death, hung upon a stake or gallows, and his flesh given to the birds of heaven to eat. Although the interpretation seems so simple, it is clear that God Himself here drew aside the veil of the future.

THE DREAMS COME TRUE. — V. 20. **And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants,** it being the custom of the ancient kings to celebrate these occasions with a great show of pomp; **and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants,** he caused

them both to be fetched out of the prison, but his object in doing so differed widely. V. 21. **And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand,** he was reinstated in his former office; v. 22. **but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.** V. 23. **Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.** In the happiness attending his deliverance from prison he forgot the humble Hebrew of the prison, for such is the way of the world. Also in this story Joseph is a type of Christ, who, like the Hebrew young man of old, was reckoned with the transgressors and had to go down into the greatest depths of disgrace and humility.

CHAPTER 41.

Pharaoh's Dreams and the Exaltation of Joseph.

The Two Dreams of Pharaoh. — V. 1. **And it came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh dreamed; and, behold, he stood by the river,** on the banks of the Nile. This was after the imprisonment of Joseph had lasted two more whole years. V. 2. **And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favored kine and fat-fleshed,** cows in the best of condition, both as to appearance and flesh; **and they fed in a meadow,** in the luscious grass on the banks of the Nile. V. 3. **And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favored and lean-fleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river.** The cows in the second set were in an extremely poor condition, very lean as to flesh, but they followed hard upon the first set. V. 4. **And the ill-favored and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine.** The lean cows devoured the fat cows, without, however, deriving any benefit therefrom, v. 21. **So Pharaoh awoke,** the vividness of the dream bringing him to his senses with a start. V. 5. **And he slept and dreamed the second time; and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good,** long, full, heavy ears, indicating great fertility. V. 6. **And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.** This was not a single stalk, as before, but seven individual thin stalks, scorched by the southeast wind from the Arabian desert, the so-called *Chamsim*. V. 7. **And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.** The picture had been so vivid in his mind's eye that Pharaoh was surprised to find it a mere dream. Yet he felt that facts of unusual importance were being brought to his attention by means of these dreams. V. 8. **And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled,** with the full awakening came the full consciousness of important events pending; **and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof,** men belonging to the priestly order who devoted themselves to astrology, dreams, fortune-telling, and magic, commonly considered the wise men of the nation. **And Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.** With all the wisdom of the kingdom at their disposal, they failed miserably, for, as one interpreter has it, "It is the doom of this world's wisdom to be dumb where its knowledge might avail, or dependence is placed upon it." Interpretation that may be depended upon belongs to God.

The Chief Butler Remembers Joseph. — V. 9. **Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day,** his offense against the king and its subsequent punishment were still strong in his memory. He did not belong to the class of the wise men of the kingdom, but, as a high officer, had the privilege of speaking to Pharaoh. V. 10. **Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker,** chap. 40, 2. 3. V. 11. **And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.** There were significant incidents in either dream which were brought out in the interpretation and emphasized by the events that followed. V. 12. **And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard,** for it was Potiphar who had made the arrangement that Joseph was to be the attendant of the butler and the baker. **And we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.** V. 13. **And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he,** that is, Joseph, in his interpretation, **restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.** He indicates his belief that Joseph's interpretation had shaped events. Thus the chief butler's gratitude, although late, came at a time when it was of most value to Joseph.

Pharaoh Tells Joseph His Dreams. — V. 14. **Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph,** he gave orders that he should be fetched, **and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon,** the word being used here again to designate the unpleasantness of the prison. The description shows how quickly the fortunes of Joseph turned. **And he shaved himself,** the Egyptian custom permitting long hair and a beard only in case of mourning, **and**

changed his raiment, as one fully sensible of the great honor conferred upon him, **and came in unto Pharaoh.** V. 15. **And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.** In his anxiety Pharaoh overstated the facts, intimating that it was but necessary for Joseph to hear a dream, and the interpretation would follow as a matter of course. V. 16. **And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me,** literally, By no means I; Joseph was far from arrogating to himself this ability; — **God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.** It was both a prayer and a promise. V. 17. **And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river;** v. 18. **and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored; and they fed in a meadow;** v. 19. **and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness.** As Pharaoh remembers the scene in his dream, the extreme ugliness of the lean cows stood out very prominently. V. 20. **And the lean and the ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine;** v. 21. **and when they had eaten them up,** when in their greed they had swallowed them whole, **it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning.** Pharaoh added also this item for the sake of emphasis. **So I awoke.** But immediately after falling asleep again, Pharaoh dreamed once more. V. 22. **And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good;** v. 23. **and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them;** v. 24. **and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears.** Cp. vv. 5—7. **And I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me,** v. 8.

JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE DREAMS. — V. 25. **And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one,** the two dream-pictures have the same meaning; **God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do;** He is revealing His intentions of the near future. V. 26. **The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one.** They indicate seven years of great fruitfulness and plenty. V. 27. **And the seven thin and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.** The very clearness and simplicity of Joseph's explanation sets it aside from the heathen oracles. V. 28. **This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do He showeth unto Pharaoh.** He refers to the statement which he made even before Pharaoh had related his dreams, always directing the attention of the king to the Lord. V. 29. **Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt;** v. 30. **and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;** v. 31. **and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.** V. 32. **And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established,** fully determined upon, **by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.** Joseph purposely emphasized the grievousness of the years of famine, that they would be so bad as to make people forget the unusually fertile years that had gone before, just as we are inclined to feel any distress very severely and to forget the great blessings of goodness that are ours continually. Joseph's entire manner of speaking, particularly when compared with the helplessness of the Egyptian magicians, was bound to make a deep impression upon the king. V. 33. **Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt,** one who has great wisdom and executive ability, combined with a good understanding of the situation and the necessary tact. V. 34. **Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land,** the chief overseer was to be given assistants, **and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt,** of the yield of the land, **in the seven plenteous years,** in the years of great fertility. V. 35. **And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.** His advice is that royal store-houses, or granaries, be erected in all the chief cities, to be kept for provision against the lean years. V. 36. **And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt,** to tide the inhabitants over the critical period; **that the land perish not through the famine.** This counsel was not an act of presumption on the part of Joseph, but a bit of advice which the Lord gave to Pharaoh by his mouth. God blesses, protects, and keeps a whole country for the sake of the believers that may be living in it.

JOSEPH MADE RULER OVER ALL EGYPT. — V. 37. **And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants.** They were highly pleased both with the interpretation of the dreams and with the advice which Joseph added. V. 38. **And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the**

Spirit of God is? He acknowledged the divine illumination, the supernatural understanding and wisdom of Joseph. V. 39. **And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art,** Joseph did not have his equal in the entire kingdom. V. 40. **Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled,** the entire nation would be subject to his command; **only in the throne will I be greater than thou.** So Joseph was elevated to a much higher position than that of chief overseer or tax-collector, being nominated Pharaoh's grand vizier. V. 41. **And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.** Formally and solemnly the dignity was conferred upon him. V. 42. **And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.** These were the insignia of his exalted office, the seal-ring to affix to the royal decrees, the fine white byssus robe, which placed him on a level with the highest priests in the land, the gold chain as a special mark of royal favor. V. 43. **And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee,** an Egyptian word being here taken up into the Hebrew text; **and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.** V. 44. **And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.** By virtue of the authority which Pharaoh, as the supreme ruler, vested in Joseph, the actions of the entire nation should be subject to Joseph's command. V. 45. **And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah** (preserver of life, or: revealer of secrets); **and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On.** On, or Heliopolis (throne of the sun), was the leading city in Egypt in learning, the priests of the sun goddess having a college of their own, which ranked with the best of the ancient universities. Thus it was a great honor which was conferred upon Joseph. But the hand of God, who lifted him out of the depths of his disgrace, kept him from being engulfed by the Egyptian heathendom. **And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt,** thus becoming acquainted with the country, its people, and its institutions, all of which stood him in good stead as ruler.

The Seven Years of Plenty. — V. 46. **And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt.** He had thus been in the country for thirteen years, a number of which he had spent in disgrace in prison. **And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.** He made a formal tour of inspection in order to perfect his plans, especially for the storing of the grain which would be demanded as a tax extraordinary. V. 47. **And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls,** the fields yielded crops in big bundles, enormous harvests being gathered every year. V. 48. **And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.** The fifth part of every year's crop Joseph gathered in such a manner that the grain from every district was brought to the store-house, or granary, in the chief city of that district. V. 49. **And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.** He gave orders to the officers in the various store-houses to discontinue entering the amounts delivered in special lists, since the supply was beyond figures. V. 50. **And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bare unto him.** V. 51. **And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh** (forgetting, or: one that causes to forget); **For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.** His grief and sorrow had probably often been excessive, and his longing for his father's house had amounted to a passion, but now the Lord, as Luther remarks, had taught him to place all his confidence in God alone. Joseph must gradually have gained the impression that Jehovah had permitted his slavery in Egypt for a definite purpose, and he yielded to the will of God in simple humility. V. 52. **And the name of the second called he Ephraim** (double fruitfulness); **for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.** In spite of his exaltation Egypt remained to Joseph the land of his affliction, and he longed for the Land of Promise. Thus do the believers, no matter how richly they are blessed by the Lord with the riches and honors of this world, ever long for the home above.

The Beginning of the Famine. — V. 53. **And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.** Everything was fulfilled just as the Lord had revealed through the mouth of Joseph. V. 54. **And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said; and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.** All the surrounding countries were stricken with the famine, just as they all had probably partaken of the rich and plentiful years, for the winds from the Mediterranean which deposit their moisture in the highlands of Abyssinia and thus produce the annual overflow of the Nile do the same for the moun-

tains of Palestine. V. 55. **And when all the land of Egypt was famished,** when the inhabitants had eaten their supply and were beginning to feel the effects of the famine, **the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you do.** Joseph had charge of the matter, and therefore he would supply their wants. V. 56. **And the famine was over all the face of the earth,** over all the countries far and wide which ordinarily depended upon Egypt for grain. **And Joseph opened all the storehouses,** all the places where he had stored grain, **and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt,** it made its effects felt throughout the country. V. 57. **And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn because that the famine was so sore in all lands.** Joseph's example in this story is one of true prudence and foresight. God is well able to keep His children in the midst of want, but He also wants us to be careful stewards over that which He has given us, that we do not suffer needlessly.

CHAPTER 42.

Joseph's Brothers in Egypt.

THE ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. — V. 1. **Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt,** having undoubtedly gotten the information from his Canaanite neighbors, many of whom were merchants, **Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?** The mention of Egypt caused the brethren to look upon one another with a helpless and suspicious questioning, for their conscience reminded them of the fact that Joseph had been sold into Egypt. V. 2. **And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt,** grain which people could buy for their own needs; **get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.** All this appears to have happened at a family council at which Jacob, as the head of the family or tribe, presided. He saw no need for a long discussion or for hesitation: it was a matter of life and death. V. 3. **And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt,** to obtain provisions for the family. V. 4. **But Benjamin, Joseph's brother,** his full brother by Rachel, **Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.** Benjamin was now just entering manhood, being about twenty-one years old or somewhat more. Jacob had given him all the affection which he had formerly felt for Joseph, and his objection that some accident to life and limb might befall Benjamin was founded upon the fact that he believed Joseph to have been killed by wild beasts. V. 5. **And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came; for the famine was in the land of Canaan.** They were only a few of a great number that came down from Canaan to buy a supply of grain for their needs, that were thus dependent upon the generosity of the Egyptian ruler for their food. V. 6. **And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land.** As the ruler of the country by Pharaoh's decree and as the chief overseer of the store-houses, Joseph exercised the greatest care in selling to strangers, and it seems to have been the rule that the foreigners were to be presented to him in person. **And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth,** the dream of Joseph being thus fulfilled, chap. 37, 7. 8. V. 7. **And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them,** he literally spoke to them hard things; **and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.** It was an easy matter for Joseph, even after the lapse of some twenty years, to recognize his brothers; their number, their language, their clothing, their manner indicated at once who they were. But not one of them would have looked for Joseph in the person of this despotic Egyptian, whose dress and language were entirely foreign to them. Joseph purposely spoke harshly to them, in order to sound them out, to find whether their hearts had changed in the last two decades. Though he still loved them, his treatment would provide some wholesome discipline for them.

IN PRISON AS SPIES. — V. 8. **And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.** V. 9. **And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come,** the open, unfortified places of the country, where an attack by a hostile army would be successful. It was a particularly hard test which Joseph determined upon, but in no manner to be compared to the distress of thirteen years as slave which he had to bear on their account. V. 10. **And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.** The very idea of their suffering the fate of spies filled them with the greatest consternation and fear. V. 11. **We are all one man's sons,** not a band of adventurers, **we are true men, thy servants are no spies.** They protest, with mortified pride, that they are upright and honest. It did not stand to reason that a father would send out all his sons on an errand which

would result in their execution if they should be caught. V. 12. **And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.** V. 13. **And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.** Joseph's refusal to believe their assurance of innocence brings him the further information that his aged father is still alive, and that Benjamin is well at home. Their non-committal manner in referring to Joseph shows that they bore uneasy consciences on his account, but they could say no more to the Egyptian ruler. V. 14. **And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies.** He treats their mention of a brother at home as a mere subterfuge, as an attempt to make their story plausible. V. 15. **Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.** Joseph, maintaining his rôle as an Egyptian, demands that they should produce this brother, the mention of whom was intended to disarm suspicion. V. 16. **Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies.** If this brother, whose existence they allege, would be forthcoming, then he would be willing to believe them, but if not, then they should, as he solemnly says, be regarded and treated as spies. V. 17. **And he put them all together into ward three days,** thus giving them an opportunity to discuss the situation from all sides and to think over some of their past misdeeds. V. 18. **And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:** v. 19. **If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses;** v. 20. **but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die.** Here the love of Joseph for his brothers appears. He assures them that the fear of God governs him, he bids them take up the grain for the needs of their family, and while he does not change his condition that he wants to see Benjamin before believing in their uprightness, he relieves the severity by demanding only one out of their midst as hostage, while he offers to dismiss the rest. If they were really repentant, he knew that this way of dealing with them would be sure to have the desired effect. **And they did so;** the brethren agreed to this condition in its present form.

Simeon Kept Back in Egypt. — V. 21. **And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.** More than twenty years after their crime their consciences cause them to confess that they were indeed weighed down with guilt on account of their brother, whose deep anguish and heart-rending cries had at that time made no impression on them. V. 22. **And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required.** Reuben was by no means innocent in the matter of Joseph, and his present reminder was not in the sense of a reproach by which he meant to clear himself. But he declared their present plight to come from the avenging justice of God, who thus demanded the freedom and the blood of their brother at their hands. All these expressions showed that the brothers were deeply repentant for their sin, for they willingly bowed themselves under the punishment of the Lord. V. 23. **And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter,** who was between him and his brothers and communicated all his commands to them in their own tongue, since Joseph purposely feigned ignorance of their language. V. 24. **And he turned himself about from them, and wept** at this evidence of their complete change of heart; **and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.** He spared Reuben, either because he did not want to harm the right of the firstborn, or because Reuben was less guilty than some of the rest. His object had been attained, he had the information which he sought.

The Return to Canaan. — V. 25. **Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way; and thus did he unto them.** Since it was not advisable, at this time, for him to reveal the reasons for acting thus, Joseph resorted to this secret measure, his object being to keep his brothers in a state of bewilderment and fear for the present. Provisions for the way he sent along, lest they be obliged to open their sacks very soon. V. 26. **And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.** The grain which they had brought for their needs made a big load, and they had a journey of several days. V. 27. **And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn,** at the place where they encamped for the night, probably in one of the shed-like buildings which are found along the caravan roads, **he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth.** V. 28. **And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack; and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?** In their great consternation

over this unexplainable happening they hastily conclude that it was another way in which God was visiting their transgression upon them. V. 29. **And they came unto Jacob, their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,** v. 30. **The man who is the lord of the land spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.** V. 31. **And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies;** v. 32. **we be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.** V. 33. **And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men: leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone;** v. 34. **and bring your youngest brother unto me; then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men; so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land,** have the right to trade, to buy and sell in the country. Thus the brethren gave their father a complete account of the strange happenings which had befallen them on their journey; and yet, there was missing a frank confession of their great sin. What they had confessed to one another they did not yet dare to tell their father. It was necessary to employ still sterner measures to reach that point.

JACOB'S GRIEF. — V. 35. **And it came to pass, as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money,** the little sacks of silver with which they thought they had paid their grain, **they were afraid.** Surely the ruler of Egypt would now regard them as thieves. This fear was to have a wholesome effect, for it was intended to soften the hard hearts still more, just as the Lord even after conversion exhibits our sinfulness to us, in order that our knowledge of His grace may be all the sweeter. V. 36. **And Jacob, their father, said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me.** The renewed grief over the disappearance of Joseph, the apparent loss of Simeon, and now the anguish concerning Benjamin caused Jacob to cry out in bitterness that he was being made childless, that he was losing his children, one after another. V. 37. **And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee.** He thus offered his dearest and best as hostages, as a guarantee for the safe return of Benjamin. **Deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.** V. 38. **And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave,** to the realm of the dead. That was Jacob's decision at that time, and his sons could not get him to change his mind. Thus the Lord visits His children with manifold sorrows, but His chastisement always reveals His goodness.

CHAPTER 43.

The Second Journey to Egypt.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY. — V. 1. **And the famine was sore in the land.** V. 2. **And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.** Since the land of Canaan had no relief in the next year, but the famine rather grew worse, the store of grain was soon consumed, and the necessity was thereby suggested of their making a second journey to Egypt for the purpose of purchasing food, something to eat, for their households. V. 3. **And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you.** There was a reason for the solemn testifying of Joseph, since he was so anxious to see his full brother, the only other son of his mother Rachel. Judah here steps to the front, Reuben having already failed, and Levi having lost the confidence of his father on account of the affair at Shechem. Judah's attitude is gentle, but firm, and shows an unselfish devotion. V. 4. **If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food;** v. 5. **but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you.** That was the alternative and the condition, and Judah was not in a position to change it. V. 6. **And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?** Some of the petulance of old age appears here, though it is by no means excluded that Jacob occasionally suspected his sons of knowing more about the disappearance of Joseph than they cared to tell. V. 7. **And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state,** he asked again and again, he was very inquisitive and insistent, **and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? Have ye another brother? And we told him according to the tenor of these words,** they answered him as best they could and exactly. **Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring**

your brother down? The account of the preceding chapter is thus supplemented. V. 8. **And Judah said unto Israel, his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.** Judah follows up the somewhat timid apology of his brothers with a bold stroke, which was intended to overcome the objections of his father by its suddenness and daring. V. 9. **I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever.** As his forefather did here, thus did the great descendant of Judah, our Lord Jesus Christ, become surety for us, by offering Himself for us into the very mouth of death. V. 10. **For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.** The delay occasioned by the father's stubborn hesitation was threatening them all with starvation. There was need for quick, energetic action, and only so could they expect a joyful and speedy return.

Jacob Permits Benjamin to Go. — V. 11. **And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels,** literally, the song of the country, that for which the country is known and praised everywhere, of this they were to take in their packs; **and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds.** The balm of Gilead, for which Canaan was famed, the honey of grapes, that is, must, boiled down, the white resinous tragacanth-gum, the nuts which at that time were obtained in Southern Canaan, and the fruits of the almond-tree made very acceptable presents. V. 12. **And take double money in your hand,** second money in addition to that which they felt they still owed the Egyptian ruler; **and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.** The shrewdness of Jacob wanted to provide for every emergency. V. 13. **Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man;** v. 14. **and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother** (Simeon) **and Benjamin.** He places the matter entirely into the hands of God, trusting, in simple confidence, that the Lord will stretch out over his sons the hand of His almighty protection and keep especially Benjamin from all harm. **If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.** That was not a word of hopeless despair, but of trusting resignation: Jacob was willing to take also that upon himself, if the Lord willed it, that he would be childless. Thus the believers at all times commit their ways to the Lord and put their full trust in Him.

The Brothers before Joseph. — V. 15. **And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.** The journey is thus again disposed of in just a few words. V. 16. **And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house,** to his chief steward, **Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.** The presence of Benjamin in the midst of his brothers was to Joseph proof positive that they had practised no treachery upon him, and so the order that they should dine with him at noon was a special favor. V. 17. **And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.** The strangers from Canaan were simply bidden to follow. V. 18. **And the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house;** their former treatment caused them to suspect that they might again be thrown into prison. **And they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in,** the punishment of a thief, if he was unable to make good the loss, consisted in his being sold as a slave; **that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us,** suddenly surprise and overcome them, **and take us for bondmen, and our asses.** This they wanted to avoid, if possible, since in the matter of the money, at any rate, they felt guiltless. V. 19. **And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,** before they ever consented to enter, v. 20. **and said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food;** v. 21. **and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, to the place where they camped for the night, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight.** They summarize the two discoveries at the opening of the sacks, and prevent any accusation by declaring that their silver, in rings or pieces, had been there in full weight; **and we have brought it again in our hand.** V. 22. **And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food; we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.** Thus the brothers, with hearts full of fear, protested their innocence. V. 23. **And he said, Peace be to you, fear not; your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.** With all gentle kindliness the steward, who may have known the true God through the teaching of Joseph, calmed their fears and bade them not to worry, since their money had come to him in due payment. **And he brought Simeon out unto them,** thereby bringing about a happy reunion. V. 24. **And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and**

they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. He showed them every attention that is given to honored guests. V. 25. **And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon; for they heard that they should eat bread there.** They laid out the various items that made up the present for the Egyptian lord that he might see them at once upon entering and thus be inclined to look upon them with favor.

THE MEAL IN JOSEPH'S HOUSE. — V. 26. **And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth,** thus again fulfilling the dream which Joseph had told them about twenty-two years before, chap. 37, 7. 10. V. 27. **And he asked them of their welfare,** literally, he inquired after their peace, **and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?** It was a most kind and solicitous inquiry, intended to put them at their ease, while it satisfied the anxiety of Joseph himself. V. 28. **And they answered, Thy servant, our father, is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance,** thus showing the proper courtesy to Joseph and true filial respect for their father. V. 29. **And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?** It was the first time in twenty-two years that he saw this brother, and the latter had been an infant of about one year when Joseph had been sold into Egypt. **And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son,** an expression both of true kindness and of relationship. V. 30. **And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother,** his love excited his feelings to such an extent that he could no longer control himself; **and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.** In the seclusion of his own room he could give free vent to his feelings. V. 31. **And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself,** he forcibly kept his feelings under control, **and said, Set on bread;** thereby ordering dinner to be served. V. 32. **And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians which did eat with him by themselves; because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.** Cp. Deut. 12, 17; 16, 5; 17, 15. Although they all ate in the same room, they were served at different tables, as the rules of the caste required. Joseph belonged to the priestly caste and could therefore not sit down at the same table with laymen, and the Egyptians would not eat at the same table with members of a nomad tribe. V. 33. **And they sat before him,** their table was placed so that he had a full view of it, **the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth; and the men marveled one at another;** they wondered where the Egyptians had gotten the information regarding their respective ages. V. 34. **And he took and sent messes unto them from before him,** portions from his own table, which was a mark of special distinction; **but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs.** This, in a way, was again a test, to see whether the brothers were still prone to become jealous. **And they drank, and were merry with him,** their reserve melted under the influence of the wine, and Joseph had the best opportunity to study them as their fear of the Egyptian ruler gave way to a respectful confidence. Thus the Lord mingles kindness with severity, and lets us taste His favor in full measure after some grievous experience has filled our hearts with fear.

CHAPTER 44.

The Last Trial of the Brothers.

THE TEST. — V. 1. **And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.** The feast which Joseph had arranged may have lasted a large part of the afternoon. At its conclusion the chief steward received orders to have the sacks of the strangers filled, but with very good measure. The return of the money in this case did not belong to the test but inasmuch as it was intended to strengthen the general impression. V. 2. **And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money.** The placing of this cup in Benjamin's sack had the object to concentrate the test upon his person, to bring his person into the foreground. **And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.** Everything having been prepared according to Joseph's plans, the brothers spent the night in the Egyptian city. V. 3. **As soon as the morning was light,** with the earliest dawn, **the men were sent away, they and their asses,** they were dismissed without any intimation of the surprise in store for them. V. 4. **And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them** (he was to pursue until he did overtake them), **say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?** Having been received and feasted by Joseph in such

a royal manner, had they been so mean and treacherous as to become guilty of theft? The haste was necessary lest some one of the brothers open his sack and they all return of their own free will. V. 5. **Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?** In order to play his rôle as Egyptian ruler to the end, Joseph has the steward represent the matter as though he practised hydromancy, that is, presumed to predict future events from the appearance of the liquid contents of his cup, also to expose hidden things. **Ye have done evil in so doing.** They were flatly to be accused of the theft, the subsequent discovery of the cup being intended to confirm the impression of Joseph's supernatural wisdom. V. 6. **And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words,** in bold accusation and with well-feigned anger. V. 7. **And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing.** In the consciousness of their innocence the brothers repel the charge with horror: Far be it from thy servants, the idea never entered our minds. V. 8. **Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan;** this surely was proof of their honesty; **how, then, should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?** V. 9. **With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.** That made the denial as vigorous as could be expected from innocent men. V. 10. **And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words; he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.** The chief steward accepted their proposal, but with the modification which agreed with Joseph's object in the trial, namely, to find out how the brothers were disposed toward Benjamin, especially now that he had been honored so signally by Joseph. V. 11. **Then they speedily,** as their outraged feelings of innocence demanded, **took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.** They were absolutely certain that the cup would not be found. V. 12. **And he,** the chief steward, **searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest,** partly to hide his own share in the scheme, partly to make the climax all the more effective. **And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.** This was an outcome which not one of them had expected, their feeling of relief having grown as one sack after another had not yielded the cup. V. 13. **Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.** They were overcome with terror, fear, and grief, and it was with a feeling of the greatest dejection that they turned back to the city which they had left with such light hearts a few hours before.

Judah's Heroic Behavior. — V. 14. **And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there,** having waited for their return. Judah is now the leader among the brothers, a position which was later confirmed to him. **And they fell before him on the ground,** in speechless terror and abject surrender. This showed the spirit which now lived in them, as well as the fact that they had not permitted Benjamin to return alone and that they willingly placed themselves under the direction of Judah. V. 15. **And Joseph said unto them,** in apparent indignation, **What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?** He intimated that a man in his position and of his wisdom was able to discover the most carefully hidden things. Cp. v. 5. V. 16. **And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves?** He felt that the circumstantial evidence against them was so strong as to oblige the ruler to decide against them. **God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants;** he and his brothers recognized in this strange shaping of events the judgment of God upon their former guilt, and their repentance was certainly genuine. **Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also with whom the cup is found.** Thus Judah includes all the brothers with himself as champions of Benjamin, whom they would not permit to enter slavery alone. Judah exhibited a wonderful self-denial, magnanimity, and generosity, even while he was struggling with despair. V. 17. **And he said, God forbid that I should do so;** far be it from me to act upon this suggestion; **but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.** This is the climax of the test which Joseph had proposed, for now the brothers could show whether they would take this opportunity to get rid of the second son of Rachel, as they had gotten rid of the first: Benjamin would remain in Egypt as Joseph's slave, while the others would go scot-free. V. 18. **Then Judah came near unto him and said,** stepping forward in his great agitation, **O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh.** His request was made in the greatest humility, in the full consciousness of his own unworthiness. V. 19. **My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?** V. 20. **And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.** With unconscious, artless skill the love of Jacob for the one remaining son of his old age from his beloved Rachel is here pictured. V. 21. **And thou saidst unto thy**

servants, Bring him down unto me that I may set mine eyes upon him. The pleading here is less formal, and more fervent. V. 22. **And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die.** From this we may conclude that the refusal of the brothers to bring Benjamin had caused their first imprisonment. It was the prospect of a favorable reception on the part of Joseph that had made the brothers consent. V. 23. **And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more,** which was equivalent to telling them that they could purchase no more grain, unless they complied with this condition. V. 24. **And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord.** V. 25. **And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.** V. 26. **And we said, We cannot go down; if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.** V. 27. **And thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife,** Rachel, whom only he really considered such in the full name of the word, **bare me two sons;** v. 28. **and the one went out from me,** he was taken from Jacob in a violent manner, **and I said, Surely, he is torn in pieces,** that was the only conclusion he could reach from the evidence presented; **and I saw him not since;** v. 29. **and if ye take this also from me, and mischief,** some harm or danger, **befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.** It was a masterly presentation of the love and devotion which now characterized the relationship in the family of Jacob. With these words Judah reached the conclusion of his plea, in a remarkably eloquent outburst. V. 30. **Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life,** his soul was literally tied to the soul of Benjamin; v. 31. **it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave,** to the realm of the dead. V. 32. **For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever.** V. 33. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.** This entreaty was a wonderful exhibition of love, both for the aged father and for Benjamin, since it involved becoming a slave in Egypt without hope of redemption. V. 34. **For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? Lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on** (find or strike) **my father.** This lofty and impressive, vivid and passionate prayer, culminating in the last touching appeal with its self-sacrificing offer, is one of the sublimest passages in the entire Old Testament, reminding us, incidentally, of the infinitely greater sacrifice which the Champion out of the tribe of Judah, who became surety for His brethren according to the flesh, made by giving His life for theirs.

CHAPTER 45.

The Reconciliation between Joseph and His Brothers.

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN. — V. 1. **Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me.** Now that he had such unmistakable proof of the genuineness of his brothers' repentance, it was no longer possible for him to control his feelings. But he did not want his Egyptian servants to witness his reconciliation with his brothers. **And there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren,** all of the attendants having left the room at his command, as being unable to understand the revelations that would now be made. V. 2. **And he wept aloud;** his emotion, his agitation, so long repressed, broke forth like a flood carrying with it every obstruction. **And the Egyptians,** the servants outside, **and the house of Pharaoh heard,** either because the house of Joseph was near the royal palace or because the news was quickly carried there. V. 3. **And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph.** The abruptness of the announcement was caused by the intensity of his emotion. **Doth my father yet live?** He had been given the information before, chap. 43, 28, but his loving anxiety demands assurance once more. **And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence.** The terrors of an evil conscience took hold of them once more, and their astonishment prevented their saying so much as a word. V. 4. **And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you.** He was obliged to coax and invite them. **And they came near,** more by reason of his invitation than by the power of their love. **And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.** He says it not by way of reproach, but to assure them of his identity. V. 5. **Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither.** He saw, from the expression of their faces and eyes, that sorrow over their crime and anger over their miserable jealousy was struggling in their hearts. **For**

God did send me before you to preserve life; the entire matter, though full of human weakness and sin, had, by God's dispensation, redounded to the preservation of life, not only in Egypt, but also for the patriarchal family. V. 6. **For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.** The famine, as Joseph vividly states, was even then in the midst of the land, and for five more years there would be neither plowing nor reaping. V. 7. **And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.** The saving of the patriarchal family, the bearers of the Messianic promise, was of even greater importance than the preserving of the Egyptians. It was the will of God, as Joseph now recognized very clearly, that the family and the posterity of Jacob should be kept alive through this famine, the final result being that they would be a multitude, escaped from death and destruction. Even here the Messianic idea is not wanting. V. 8. **So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God;** they were mere instruments in the hand of Providence; **and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh,** his confidential counselor and friend, **and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.** Thus Joseph, formerly apparently a tyrant, forgave his repentant brothers their great sin and assured them that he bore them no ill will, just as the Lord, after trying us with great severity, proves Himself our dear Father in Christ Jesus. V. 9. **Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not;** v. 10. **and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen,** in the eastern Nile delta, **and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast;** v. 11. **and there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty,** be so greatly impoverished as to suffer actual want, his possessions being taken over by others. Toward this message and invitation the entire speech of Joseph had tended. And, the brothers still being perplexed, Joseph once more urged them to see the situation correctly. V. 12. **And, behold, your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you,** that the entire scene was not a dream and a delusion. V. 13. **And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.** The more complete the description of actual conditions, the sooner would Jacob believe; and what Joseph desired above all was haste. V. 14. **And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.** Having relieved his heart of its pent-up emotion in this manner, Joseph now greeted, first of all, his brother Benjamin, as was to be expected after a separation of more than twenty years. V. 15. **Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them,** while they were in his embrace; **and after that his brethren talked with him,** having now gained the assurance that Joseph did not intend to take revenge upon them, but that his love had forgotten all the wrong committed by them.

Jacob Invited to Egypt. — V. 16. **And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come.** The news reached the royal palace very soon. **And it pleased Pharaoh well and his servants,** which shows the high regard that Joseph enjoyed; for all nomadic tribes, including the Hebrews, were despised by the Egyptians. The latter fact was forgotten in the universal joy. V. 17. **And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts and go;** v. 18. **get you unto the land of Canaan;** v. 18. **and take your father and your households, and come unto me; and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.** The best, the richest products of the country should be at their disposal, just as if they were truly the relatives of royalty. V. 19. **Now thou art commanded, this do ye,** the language of authoritative courtesy: **Take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.** They were to be provided with all the conveniences of travel, especially with the two-wheeled wagons of Egypt, which could very well be used even in the trackless desert. V. 20. **Also regard not your stuff,** they should not mind the loss of some articles of furniture which could not well be transported for such a long distance; **for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.** V. 21. **And the children of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way;** he took care of all their needs for the journey. V. 22. **To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment;** every one of the brothers was fitted out with a new suit of clothes; **but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment,** holiday clothing, as a change for the usual dress. V. 23. **And to his father he sent after this manner: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt,** presents to indicate what Jacob might expect in the land whose king had invited him, **and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.** The grain, the bread, and the other food was to serve as provisions for Jacob and his household on their way to Egypt. V. 24. **So he sent his brethren away, and they departed; and he**

said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way. They should not be tempted to hark back to the old crime, as to who had really instigated the wrong, and thus sin again. It is a warning which has its value even to-day, in similar circumstances. V. 25. **And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob, their father,** v. 26. **and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.** Their extreme joy makes them almost too abrupt in the announcement of their news. **And Jacob's heart fainted,** it stopped in chill and amazement, **for he believed them not.** The news was too wonderful to be true, after all these years of mourning. V. 27. **And they told him all the words of Joseph which he had said unto them; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him,** concrete evidence of Joseph's love and of the truth of the account concerning him, **the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived;** he was filled with new life and vigor. V. 28. **And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.** He no longer doubted; he was convinced; and he had only one great desire, namely, to see his son as soon as possible. The Lord may cause His children to bear many heavy crosses for many years, but eventually He always brings joy and happiness into their hearts.

CHAPTER 46.

Jacob Moves to Egypt.

THE JOURNEY OVER BEERSHEBA TO EGYPT. — V. 1. **And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.** From Hebron, chap. 37, 14, Jacob, the father of the children of Israel, removed everything that could be transported without difficulty, and journeyed first of all to Beersheba, on the southern border of Canaan. Although the pressure of the famine and the invitation of both Joseph and Pharaoh were apparently hints from God, yet he was not without serious apprehension and anxiety at the greatness of the undertaking and its possible consequences. V. 2. **And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night and said, Jacob, Jacob! And he said, Here am I.** So God Himself, whom he had worshiped with his sacrifices, appeared to Jacob at this decisive moment, speaking to him in a dream-vision by night. V. 3. **And He said, I am God,** the Powerful, the Mighty One, **the God of thy father, the only true God. Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.** What God had said to Abraham in a general way, chap. 15, 13—16, he here referred to the sojourn in Egypt. He not only sanctioned the removal of Jacob to Egypt, but promised His blessing also in the strange land. V. 4. **I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again.** His protection would attend their removal, their stay, and the eventual return of the children of Israel. This promise, moreover, was to remind Jacob of the greater and more important prophecy, that of the Messiah, who was to be his descendant. **And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes;** the last service of love when Jacob closed his eyes in death would be performed by the son whom he had so long mourned as dead. V. 5. **And Jacob rose up from Beersheba,** he continued his journey cheerfully; **and the sons of Israel carried Jacob, their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry them,** all the hardships of the journey being thus eliminated. V. 6. **And they took their cattle and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan,** surely an immense caravan, **and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him;** v. 7. **his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters,** a general expression, which probably includes not only Dinah and Serah, but also the daughters-in-law, **and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.** No matter how conditions in life may change for believers, the Word of God's mercy remains unchanged, and His goodness and truth is over them forever.

LIST OF THE SOULS IN JACOB'S FAMILY. — V. 8. **And these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt: Jacob and his sons,** the names being here recorded as the forefathers of that great nation which grew up in Egypt: **Reuben, Jacob's first-born.** V. 9. **And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.** V. 10. **And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel** (or Nemuel), **and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin** (or Jarib), **and Zohar** (or Zerah), **and Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman** Cp. Num. 26, 12. 13; 1 Chron. 4, 24. V. 11. **And the sons of Levi: Gershon** (or Gershom), **Kohath, and Merari.** V. 12. **And the sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah. But Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul.** V. 13. **And the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Phuvah** (or Puah), **and Job** (or Jashub), **and Shimron.** Cp. 1 Chron. 7, 1. V. 14. **And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel.** V. 15. **These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram,** where the family was founded by the birth of the six sons, **with his daughter Dinah. All the souls of his sons and daughters were**

thirty and three, namely, six sons, twenty-three grandsons, two great-grandsons, one daughter, and Jacob himself, a total of thirty-three. V. 16. **And the sons of Gad: Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon** (or Ozni), **Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.** V. 17. **And the sons of Asher: Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah, their sister; and the sons of Beriah: Heber, and Malchiel.** V. 18. **These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah, his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls;** namely, two sons, eleven grandsons, two great-grandsons, and one daughter. V. 19. **The sons of Rachel, Jacob's** (favorite or most beloved) **wife: Joseph and Benjamin.** V. 20. **And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bare unto him.** V. 21. **And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim** (or Hupham), **and Ard.** V. 22. **These are the sons of Rachel which were born to Jacob. All the souls were fourteen;** namely, two sons and twelve grandsons, including two great-grandsons, Num. 26, 40. V. 23. **And the sons of Dan: Hushim.** V. 24. **And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem.** V. 25. **These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel, his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob. All the souls were seven;** namely, two sons and five grandsons. V. 26. **All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six;** v. 27. **and the sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt were two souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were threescore and ten.** Note that this enumeration is made according to the custom which listed the founders of families in such a table, even though some of them were not yet born. Cp. Ex. 1, 5; Deut. 10, 22. In addition to the twelve sons of Jacob, who were the founders of the twelve tribes, all those grandsons and great-grandsons are listed who became the ancestors of independent families with large numbers and great influence. In the account of Stephen, Acts 7, 14, three grandsons and two great-grandsons of Joseph are included, for this reason. "Thus only can the fact be explained, otherwise inexplicable, that in the days of Moses, with the exception of the double tribe of Joseph, there were, in none of the tribes, descendants from any son or great-grandsons of Jacob that are not mentioned in this list." The names here given represent the nucleus from which the children of Israel, the great nation, grew.

The Meeting of Jacob and Joseph. — V. 28. **And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph to direct his face unto Goshen.** It was a distinction which was here conferred upon Judah on account of his recent heroic stand; he was to receive authoritative directions from Joseph concerning the exact place set aside for the settlement of the Israelites, and then act as the guide of the caravan. **And they came into the land of Goshen,** in the northeastern part of Egypt, in the eastern delta of the Nile. V. 29. **And Joseph made ready his chariot, he had the horses hitched to his own fine wagon, and went up to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him,** appeared before him in all his royal glory; **and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while,** weeping in his embrace, his emotion over this happy reunion almost overwhelming him. V. 30. **And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.** Having experienced this last great token of the divine favor, Jacob was now ready and willing to die. V. 31. **And Joseph said unto his brethren and unto his father's house, I will go up, and show Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;** v. 32. **and the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle,** they had been herders of sheep and cattle-men all their life; **and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.** This was a sort of frankness which did not consider the lowly derivation a disgrace, unlike the behavior of many children in our days who are ashamed of the lowly station of their parents and relatives. V. 33. **And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you,** order them to appear at the royal court, **and shall say, What is your occupation?** v. 34. **that ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now,** being cattle-men was the traditional occupation of the family, **both we and also our fathers; that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen,** that Pharaoh might confirm the order of Joseph permitting them to make that their home; **for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.** Since they themselves considered agriculture the basis of national stability, the Egyptians regarded all nomadic forms of living as a barbarian form of existence. There was a good deal of shrewdness in the attitude of Joseph, for he knew that his relatives, under cover of the Egyptians' contempt, would remain secluded and unmixed, would keep their ancient religion and customs, and thus be worthy of being the bearers of the Messianic promise. Incidentally, they would be occupying a very rich section of the land of Egypt. It is far better to be in a lowly station and remain faithful to the Lord than to occupy a position of prominence and deny His goodness and mercy.

CHAPTER 47.

Events in Egypt during the Famine.

JACOB AND FIVE OF HIS SONS PRESENTED TO PHARAOH. — V. 1. **Then Joseph came, and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.** This was the formal and official notification of their arrival in Pharaoh's domain. V. 2. **And he took some of his brethren,** out of their total number, **even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.** V. 3. **And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers.** As Joseph had foreseen the question of Pharaoh, so his instruction to his brothers had just covered the case. V. 4. **They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land,** to live here only a while as strangers, **are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.** V. 5. **And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee;** v. 6. **the land of Egypt is before thee, in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell;** he might give them places to live in whatsoever part he considered most excellent for their purposes; **in the land of Goshen let them dwell.** It is a fine bit of tact on the part of Pharaoh in yielding to Joseph the right and the decision as to the settlement in Goshen. **And if thou knowest any men of activity among them,** able, energetic men, **then make them rulers over my cattle,** they were to be given positions as chief herdsmen. V. 7. **And Joseph brought in Jacob, his father,** after the first part of the audience had terminated so successfully, **and set him before Pharaoh,** presented him to the king; **and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.** It was not an ordinary, humble greeting, but a true priestly blessing. V. 8. **And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?** an inquiry of courtesy. V. 9. **And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years.** The expression is purposely chosen to indicate extension, duration. **Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.** The complaint of Moses is here anticipated: "Yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away," Ps. 90, 10. The age of Jacob, although he did not die as soon as he expected, did indeed fall much short of that of Abraham and Isaac, and in addition, his shorter life had brought him much grief and sorrow. The believers have no guarantee of immunity against the troubles of this earth, but, on the contrary, very often are obliged to carry an unusual measure, and they bear them willingly in the fear of God. V. 10. **And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.** If the princes of the world grant to the believers a place where they may live and worship in peace and security, they will receive the blessings of the Lord in return.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SEVERE FAMINE. V. 11. **And Joseph placed his father and his brethren,** he assigned them land where they might live, **and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses,** another name for Goshen, probably from its capital or chief city, **as Pharaoh had commanded.** Thus Joseph fulfilled all the obligations which his love for his father and for his brothers demanded of him, a shining example for our selfish age. V. 12. **And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren and all his father's household with bread, according to their families,** literally, after the mouth of the little ones, in accordance with the needs of each family, depending upon the number of children. He provided well for them. V. 13. **And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine,** they were wasting away for loss of strength. This fact is recorded to emphasize the greatness of the benefit which Joseph conferred upon his relatives. V. 14. **And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the corn which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.** The actual cash in the hands of the people of both countries was consumed in the first years of the famine, finding its way into the treasury of the king of Egypt through the hands of Joseph. V. 15. **And when money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph and said, Give us bread; for why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth.** He surely could not bear to see them die before him, while he had the means to preserve their lives. There was simply no more money to pay out; their last bit of silver had been spent for food. V. 16. **And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.** V. 17. **And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.**

He guided them according to his proposal, he provided for their needs, taking their entire possessions in herds and flocks in payment. V. 18. **When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year,** that is, the second year after they had spent their last money for food, **and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not aught left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands,** they had been stripped bare of all their movable possessions, they had given up all their personal property. V. 19. **Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land?** They had stated their plight frankly, and now looked to Joseph for relief. **Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh,** they were willing to sell themselves into slavery or peonage; **and give us seed that we may live and not die, that the land be not desolate.** It was a last, but also the only, desperate resort. V. 20. **And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's.** Joseph bought it in exchange for the food which he gave to the people to keep them alive. V. 21. **And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.** Their lands being in possession of the crown, the people were ordered to settle in and near the cities, where the storehouses were located. This measure simplified the matter of feeding the great masses during the remaining years of famine. V. 22. **Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their lands.** They were provided for at royal expense, and therefore were not placed before the alternative of selling their land or starving. V. 23. **Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh,** they were now in servitude or serfdom to the crown; **lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.** V. 24. **And it shall come to pass in the increase that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.** Considering the fact that all the land had now been transferred to the king's name, this tax, or rental, was really remarkably low, even if it included serfdom. V. 25. **And they said, Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.** The people declared themselves fully satisfied with this arrangement, since they felt the wisdom of Joseph's rule. He had prevented wasteful squandering and had averted a universal famine. He had had their welfare in mind at all times and had introduced an economic system which was to the advantage of the entire nation. V. 26. **And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day that Pharaoh should have the fifth part,** twenty per cent. of the income going into the royal treasury as revenue; **except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.** It was a great blessing for Egypt that a man was ruler in those days who combined a high degree of wisdom with the fear of God, a combination for which any country has reasons to be thankful.

Joseph's Promise to Jacob. — V. 27. **And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly.** This statement summarizes the history of the children of Israel for the next four hundred years. V. 28. **And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, so** long the Lord permitted him to share the happiness of his children; **so the whole age of Jacob was one hundred forty and seven years.** V. 29. **And the time drew nigh that Israel must die; and he called his son Joseph and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight,** if Joseph was willing to do him a last great favor, **put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh,** in a gesture accompanying a solemn oath, **and deal kindly and truly with me;** it would be an act of kindness and of faithfulness. **Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt;** v. 30. **but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place,** in the cave in the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought after Sarah's death, chap. 23, 17—20. **And he said, I will do as thou hast said.** Joseph solemnly obligated himself to carry out this earnest wish of his father. V. 31. **And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.** He was apparently sitting up on his couch and leaning on his staff, Heb. 11, 21. He now turned to the head of the bed in a prayer of thanksgiving that his last wish was to be fulfilled. Even on his death-bed Jacob did not forget the Land of Promise and the Messianic prophecy. Thus will Christians keep God's Word and promise before their eyes especially at the time when death is near.

CHAPTER 48.

Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons.

JACOB ADOPTS THE SONS OF JOSEPH. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after these things that one told Joseph,** the news was brought him by a special messenger, **Behold, thy father is sick.** This was not long after Jacob had made arrangements for the transfer of his body to Canaan for burial. **And he** (Joseph) **took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim,** who were now about twenty years old; Manasseh may have been about twenty-four and Ephraim a few years younger. V. 2. **And one told Jacob and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee,** also an announcement by a special messenger. **And Israel strengthened himself,** with the help of God he summoned all his remaining strength, **and sat upon the bed;** for he, as patriarch and bearer of the Messianic promise, had a final duty to perform. V. 3. **And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan,** at Bethel, where he received two special revelations, chap. 28, 13. 19; 35, 6. 9, **and blessed me,** v. 4. **and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee; and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.** Thus both the patriarchal and the Messianic blessing had been given to Jacob, to be fulfilled in his descendants. V. 5. **And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine.** It is significant that in this formal statement of adoption the name of Ephraim is set before that of Manasseh, the birthright thus being changed. The divine blessing of promise, of which Jacob was the bearer, empowered him to adopt these two grandsons and to give them equal rights with his oldest sons, designate their descendants as two fully recognized tribes among the children of Israel. V. 6. **And thy issue which thou begettest after them shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance;** they should not form a third tribe, but should be included in those of Ephraim and Manasseh, though their names were entered in the genealogical tables, Num. 26, 28—37; 1 Chron. 7, 14—19. Through this adoption of his oldest sons on the part of Jacob, Joseph was given the right of the firstborn in his inheritance, 1 Chron. 5, 2. By this disposition of the inheritance Jacob incidentally honored Rachel. V. 7. **And as for me, when I came from Padan,** that is, Mesopotamia, **Rachel died by me,** she died by his side, sharing with him the toil and the hardships of the pilgrim life, **in the land of Canaan in the way,** while they were on the journey, **when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem,** as the author adds by way of explanation. There was some compensation to Jacob in the fact that at least three tribes among the children of Israel would trace their ancestry to Rachel, his beloved wife. Thus her remembrance was kept sacred in Israel.

THE BLESSING UPON EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH. — V. 8. **And Israel beheld Joseph's sons and said, Who are these?** The eyes of Jacob being dim with age, he had not noticed the presence of the two young men till now. V. 9. **And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.** Till now they had stood at a respectful distance, as becomes young people in the presence of their elders. V. 10. **Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see,** just as his father's had been at the time he blessed his sons. **And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them and embraced them.** The grandfather had probably not seen the boys for years, and was overjoyed at the meeting. V. 11. **And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face,** he had not even dared to suppose that so much joy would be his; **and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed,** these children. V. 12. **And Joseph brought them out from between his knees,** where Jacob had held them in a fond embrace, **and he bowed himself with his face to the earth,** awaiting the blessing which his father was ready to give. V. 13. **And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him,** his idea being that Jacob would thus naturally place his right hand on the head of Manasseh as he blessed the boys. V. 14. **And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born;** he purposely placed the younger before the older, although this made it necessary for him to cross his arms. V. 15. **And he blessed Joseph and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,** v. 16. **the Angel,** the Son of God, who had assisted his fathers as well as himself at various times, **which redeemed me from all evil,** both of body and of soul, **bless the lads; and let my name be named on them and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;** in them the dignity and the faith of the patriarchs was to

be continued, in them God's gifts of grace and salvation should be renewed, even as they had been received by their fathers; **and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth,** their increase should be as great as that of the fishes in the sea. Thus did Jacob confess his heartfelt gratitude to God, both as his Shepherd and as his Savior, and the threefold mention of God may well have reference to the Trinity. V. 17. **And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him,** for the laying on of hands was a symbol of the transfer of spiritual gifts, and the right hand typified the greater share of these blessings; **and he held up his father's hand,** he gently took hold of it and supported it, **to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head,** thinking that his father had made a mistake without being conscious of it. V. 18. **And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head.** V. 19. **And his father refused and said, I know it, my son, I know it,** he was well aware of the fact that Manasseh, and not Ephraim, was the first-born: **he** (Manasseh) **also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.** It was not merely an old man's whim or caprice, but Jacob was acting with prophetic insight and wisdom and transmitting the blessing of the Lord. As a matter of fact, the tribe of Ephraim did pass the tribe of Manasseh in numbers and power, finally assuming the leadership of the northern tribes. V. 20. **And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee** (Joseph) **shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh; and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.** So great and unusual was the blessing of God upon these two tribes that it became proverbial among the children of Israel and was used in special formulas of well-wishing. V. 21. **And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die;** he knew that his end was now very near; **but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.** He thus passed on the prophetic promise which he had received at Beersheba, chap. 46, 4. V. 22. **Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren,** a strip of land in Canaan, **which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.** This is also a prophetic saying and refers to the time when the children of Israel conquered the Land of Promise and drove out the Canaanites before them, at which time Joseph obtained the land which contained Shechem, where also his bones were laid to rest. Thus did Jacob give to his son Joseph the field at Shechem, John 4, 5. And it was the Lord who, through Jacob, fixed the destiny of these descendants, just as He governs the entire universe according to His will.

CHAPTER 49.

Jacob Blesses His Sons before His Death.

The Blessing upon Reuben. — V. 1. **And Jacob called unto his sons, he summoned them to his death-bed, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.** In prophetic exaltation and in poetic form he sets before them what the future has in store for them, especially as to the Messianic blessings, until the end of time. V. 2. **Gather yourselves together and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel, your father.** The solemn and impressive admonition was made in order to get their full attention. The things which would befall them according to their dispositions and natures, but above all according to the providence and will of God, are now set forth. V. 3. **Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.** Jacob speaks with deep feeling: Reuben, my first-born thou, my might and the head of my strength. He was the first-fruits of Jacob's vigor, both spiritual and bodily. In him the dignity of the priesthood should have been united with the power of the ruler. But all this Reuben had forfeited. V. 4. **Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel;** he was like the bubbling of boiling water, rashly impulsive, and therefore he would lose the dignity and the preference of his birthright. **Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed,** in lying with Bilhah, his father's concubine, chap. 35, 22; **then defiledst thou it,** he desecrated what should have been sacred to him. It was a crime from which the father even now, after the lapse of so many years, turned with horror, saying, with a tinge of repulsion and bitterness; **he went up to my couch.**

The Blessing upon Simeon and Levi. — V. 5. **Simeon and Levi are brethren,** not only by parentage, but also in character; they also were unfit for leadership. **Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations,** the swords which they used in their revenge upon the Shechemites were weapons of wickedness, and Jacob does not wish to be identified with outrages of this kind. V. 6. **O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united;** the thought of being closely identified with them fills Jacob with horrified dismay. **For in their anger they slew a man,** their murdering of the helpless Shechemites was an infamous trick; **and in their self-will they**

digged down a wall, rather, houghed oxen; the cattle of the people of Shechem which they had not taken with them after their raid, chap. 34, 28, they had cruelly mutilated and caused to die a slow death by cutting the sinews of the hinder feet. V. 7. **Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce;** the anger in itself may have been justified at the time, but the fact that its violence sought such an outlet is beyond excuse; **and their wrath, for it was cruel;** they went to excess in their angry impetuosity. **I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.** This prophecy was fulfilled in such a way as to make Simeon the weakest among the tribes even before the entry into Canaan, Num. 26, 14, to omit the tribe in the blessing of Moses, Deut. 33, and to give to the tribe only a few cities within the boundaries of Judah, Josh. 19, 1—9; 1 Chron. 4, 27—43, while Levi also, redeemed in some measure by the heroic act of a member of the tribe, Num. 25, 11—13, received no section of Canaan for his portion, but lived in cities ceded by the other tribes. Thus a whole family, and even a whole nation, may have to bear the guilt of a few sinners whom the Lord was obliged to condemn.

THE BLESSING UPON JUDAH. — V. 8. **Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee.** The prophecy of the patriarch here rises to a joyful exultation, as he makes Judah the prince and ruler among his brethren and explains his name. Judah should occupy a position of power among all the children of Israel, conquer his enemies by taking hold of their necks and subduing them, in consequence of which all the tribes would recognize his sovereignty, as at the time of David. V. 9. **Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?** From his youth Judah had shown that he possessed the nature, the character of a lion, as a whelp, as a young lion, as a mature lion. Having caught his prey, the lion returns to his mountain fastnesses, into his den, where a person will attack him only at the risk of his own life. The tribe of Judah, forming the vanguard during the wilderness journey, settled on the highlands and mountains of Judea, grew to be a mighty tribe, gaining strength from the many defeats of its enemies, secure in its dominion. V. 10. **The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.** This is one of the most remarkable and inspiring Messianic promises in the entire Old Testament. The scepter is the mark of royal power, and the ruler's staff, or the mace of the chieftain, resting between his feet as he sat upright, likewise belonged to the insignia of authority and power. The government, the princely power, was to remain in the hands of Judah, culminating finally in the reign of Shiloh, the Messiah, the Author and Source of true rest, the Prince of Peace, through whom all mankind should have peace with God by the acceptance of the justification earned by Him, Rom. 5, 1. To Him the nations, His people, render obedience in faith and thus become partakers of all the blessings of His kingdom, here in time, and hereafter in eternity. V. 11. **Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes.** This part of the prophecy refers not only to the extraordinary fertility of the country of Judah in the Land of Promise, which promised him a superabundance of the most precious products of the field, garden, and herd, but represents a type of the Messianic kingdom, the kingdom of peace, with its beauty and glory, its mercy and its blessing. In Jesus Christ, the Lion out of the tribe of Judah, all these words have been fulfilled. V. 12. **His eyes shall be red with wine and his teeth white with milk.** In Him we have the fulness of those gifts which will bring us true happiness here and eternal salvation beyond the grave.

THE BLESSING UPON ZEBULUN, ISSACHAR, AND DAN. — V. 13. **Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.** The country later inhabited by the tribe of Zebulun fronted on two seas, on the Sea of Galilee in the east and on the Mediterranean in the west. Its northwestern boundary was to extend to Phenicia. Although the actual physical boundaries of Zebulun afterward did not include all this country, its influence extended to both seas and to Zidon by means of its commerce. V. 14. **Issachar is a strong ass,** literally, an ass of bone, one with a very strong bony frame, **couching down between two burdens;** v. 15. **and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute,** he willingly bowed down under a heavy load and served with hard labor. The territory of Issachar was in the fruitful plain of Jezreel, a fact which imposed upon the people the double burden of agriculture and pasturage, a hard, but beautiful service. V. 16. **Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.** Although the son of a handmaid, he still shall have a full inheritance with the other sons, and, moreover, an amount of independence, which occasionally gave him the leadership, as in the days of Samson, and which caused a part of the tribe to migrate to the extreme northern boundary of Canaan and there to establish themselves. V. 17. **Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder,** a dangerous viper, **in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.** Although this is here not spoken in a

reproachful sense, yet it characterizes the Danites, especially in their expedition against the peaceful city of Laish, Judg. 18. V. 18. **I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.** This is Jacob's longing cry in the midst of his prophecy, for he asks not only the assistance of the Lord for his descendants in this prayer, but he also confesses that his own longing to see the Messiah, like that of Eve, had not been fulfilled, and he realizes, in view of the future as disclosed in his own inspired words, that it will be some time before the Messiah would come to His people. Not for the salvation of Samson, but for that of the Messiah, who should save His people from their sins, his soul was longing.

The Prophecy upon Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin. — V. 19. **Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.** The picture is that of a person crowded by malicious hordes, who nevertheless manages not only to hold his own, but even to turn upon the masses and drive them away. The tribe of Gad, living on the eastern side of the Jordan, was harassed more or less by the desert hordes, but managed to hold its own very successfully, 1 Chron. 5, 18; 12, 8—15. V. 20. **Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties,** shall produce pleasant foods. The fat which he would bring forth on his very fertile land in the plains toward Phenicia, would be his bread, for the country was noted for the excellence of its wheat and of its olive-oil. V. 21. **Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words.** In comparing Naphtali to a gazelle, Jacob predicts that he will be both a handsome and an active warrior. The fine words probably include such poems as that sung by Deborah, Judg. 4 and 5. V. 22. **Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.** Here the prophetic song of Jacob rises to a solemn exultation. The descendants of Joseph would increase so rapidly in their territory that they would soon extend beyond their own boundaries into the neighboring tribes. V. 23. **The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him;** v. 24. **but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel).** Here the powerful and victorious growth of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh is pictured, in consequence of which all enemies would be overcome. This result, however, would not come about by their own power, but through the help of the mighty God of Jacob, by virtue of the assisting hands of God, who is both the Shepherd and the Rock of Israel. V. 25. **Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.** Rains from heaven above and sufficient water from springs and brooks to give the necessary moisture to the soil and the greatest fertility for all his herds, that is the blessing which Jacob begs from the Lord for his beloved son. V. 26. **The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.** The blessings of Jacob upon Joseph exceeded in extent and compass those of his fathers before him, rising higher than the eternal hills and surpassing them in beauty. Such a rich outward unfolding was to come upon him who excelled his brethren in dignity and power, on account of which he was separated from them by a wide gulf. V. 27. **Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.** There would be no end to the successful raids of this warlike tribe, such men as Ehud, Saul, and Jonathan being members of it. At the same time, however, there would be ever present that nobility which would be willing to divide the spoil with the others. V. 28. **All these are the twelve tribes of Israel; and this is it that their father spake unto them and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.** Not one was omitted in the blessing, although there was a big difference in the form and in the nature of the blessings.

The Death of Jacob. — V. 29. **And he charged them and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people,** the time when his soul was to be added to those of his fathers was at hand; **bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron, the Hittite,** v. 30. **in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron, the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place.** V. 31. **There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah, his wife; and there I buried Leah.** V. 32. **The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.** Cp. chap. 23. What Jacob had charged Joseph to do in the event of his death, chap. 47, 30. 31, he here repeated to all his sons, giving them explicit directions regarding the burial-ground, lest they make any mistake about it or neglect the speedy execution of his dying wish. V. 33. **And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, for he had been sitting on his couch, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people,** the expression which denotes also here the hope of a final glorious resurrection unto eternal life, a resurrection which will surely come to all that have waited for, and believed in, the salvation of the Lord.

CHAPTER 50.

The Burial of Jacob; the Death of Joseph.

THE MOURNING FOR JACOB. — V. 1. **And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him,** an evidence of deep, almost uncontrollable sorrow. V. 2. **And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father,** an art in which the Egyptians had reached a high degree of perfection, as the condition of most mummies shows. **And the physicians embalmed Israel.** They took out those organs of the body which were most easily subject to decay, filling the cavities with spices, soaking the flesh in a solution which prevented its decaying, and then wrapping the body in linen smeared with gum.6) V. 3. **And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those embalmed,** so long it took for the entire process of embalming; **and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days,** not only during the forty days of the embalming, but for thirty days more, thus giving him the honor which was given to princes in Egypt. V. 4. **And when the days of his mourning were past,** when the official, solemn mourning for Jacob had come to an end, **Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh,** to the officials of the king's court, — for since he was still in mourning, he could not appear before Pharaoh in person, — **saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,** v. 5. **My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die; in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me.** Since his father had taken the solemn oath from him, Joseph asked the courtiers to do him the favor of applying to Pharaoh for leave of absence for him, that he might bury his father. Jacob, in anticipation of his death, probably at the time when he buried Leah, had prepared also his own burial-place in the cave of Machpelah. It is by no means a sign of a sickly morbidity if Christians purchase and prepare a cemetery lot for themselves where they hope eventually to rest, for they believe in the resurrection of the dead. Joseph's request was stated: **Now, therefore, let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.** V. 6. **And Pharaoh said, Go up and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.** Pharaoh's regard for Joseph, as for a faithful servant, had in no wise been diminished, and he readily granted the request.

JACOB IS BURIED IN CANAAN. — V. 7. **And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,** the most prominent court and state officials, in recognition of Joseph's high position, v. 8. **and all the house of Joseph,** all the relatives of Joseph and of Jacob, **and his brethren, and his father's house; only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen.** V. 9. **And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company,** an immense caravan, under the protection of an armed escort. V. 10. **And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan,** on the east side of the river, the caravan finding it advantageous to travel around the Dead Sea; **and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation; and he made a mourning for his father seven days.** As distinguished from the official period of mourning in Egypt, this was a week of weeping with the chanting of dirges. V. 11. **And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians; wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim** (the mourning of the Egyptians), **which is beyond Jordan.** V. 12. **And his sons did unto him** (Jacob) **according as he commanded them,** the Egyptians apparently remaining in camp during that time; v. 13. **for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place of Ephron, the Hittite, before Mamre.** Thus they performed their last duty of love toward their father, and incidentally confessed their belief in the fact that God will finally awaken His children unto life everlasting. V. 14. **And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.** The children of Israel were not to stay in Canaan at this time, but according to the will of God many years were yet to elapse before their deliverance from Egypt would come. In his hands are the destinies of all mankind.

JOSEPH REASSURES HIS BROTHERS. — V. 15. **And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.** They thought that it had been only for the sake of his aged father that Joseph had refrained from taking revenge upon them for the wrong which they had done, that the enmity which he had concealed for so long a time would now cause him to pay them back in kind. V. 16. **And they sent a messenger unto Joseph,** they commanded or instructed some one to bring him a message, **saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,** v. 17. **So shall ye say unto Joseph, For-**

6) Lange-Schaff, *Genesis*, 663.

give, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin, for they did unto thee evil. So the sons' fear of Joseph's revenge had caused them to make a full confession to their father and to ask his advice in this difficult matter. Their repentance, their conversion, was now an accomplished fact: they had made a full and free confession. **And now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father.** Thus the brothers received perfect assurance of the forgiveness of their sin, for it is by confessing and forsaking sins that mercy is obtained. **And Joseph wept when they spake unto him,** it grieved him to think that they believed him capable of such meanness, but he wept also tears of joy over this evidence of complete repentance. V. 18. **And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.** They freely offered what they had formerly resented with indignation. V. 19. **And Joseph said unto them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God,** to judge, to condemn, and to punish? God had brought matters to pass in this manner, and it was not for Joseph to change God's purposes. V. 20. **But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.** Their evil intentions the Lord had not only frustrated, but had turned them for the best, as they plainly saw before their eyes, their own lives being saved as a consequence of the Lord's providence. V. 21. **Now, therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you and your little ones.** His kind favor would be with them as heretofore. **And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them,** thus giving an example of true forgiveness for all times; for this is the disposition which all Christians should foster most diligently.

The Death of Joseph. — V. 22. **And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house. And Joseph lived an hundred and ten years,** thus enjoying the love and the reverence of the Egyptians for eighty years. V. 23. **And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Joseph's knees.** He lived to see grandchildren and great-grandchildren, thus experiencing what it means that God shows mercy to the third and fourth generation of them that love Him and keep His commandments. V. 24. **And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.** It was his dying message, prophetical in tone, breathing his faith in the fulfilment of the divine promise, chap. 46, 4. 5. V. 25. **And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.** Like his father, he did not want his bones to rest in strange ground, but his very burial should express his faith in the patriarchal blessing and in the Messianic promise. He was sure that the Lord would visit His people with His grace and mercy. That is the final test, if a person retains his faith until the end. V. 26. **So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt,** in a chest of sycamore wood such as was used to keep a mummy until the time of burial. The children of Israel kept the oath which their fathers had sworn to Joseph. When they left Egypt, they carried the mummy of Joseph along with them, Ex. 13, 19, and when they arrived in Canaan, they buried him in the field of Jacob at Shechem, Josh. 24, 32. From Joseph we learn to set our hope forward to the great Land of Promise above and patiently to await the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

INTRODUCTION.

The second book of Moses, called Exodus (going out, departure), has been recognized as a distinct book since the time of the Jewish Church. It is not a continuation, but a sequel of the Book of Genesis, a long interval of time being passed over without record. The family of Jacob had now grown into a large nation, and the inspired author proceeds to show how the Lord carried out His promise of leading the children of Israel back to the land where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been strangers. Gen. 15, 13—16; 35, 11. 12; 48, 21. 22; 50, 25. The main purpose of the book is to relate how the theocracy, the direct government of God, was established among the people of Israel by the solemn giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, the act by which God made and confirmed the covenant which He had hinted at to the patriarchs. The book tells the history of Israel from the time that God arranged for their departure out of Egypt until the time that the Tabernacle had been dedicated near Mount Horeb. A large part of the book is devoted to the legislation on Mount Sinai, which included not only the giving of the Moral, or Natural, Law in the form of the Ten Commandments,

but also the Ceremonial, or Levitical, Law, which prescribed all forms of divine worship which were to be observed by the people of God in the centuries before the coming of Christ, and the Civil Law, which was given to the children of Israel as a separate people among the nations of the earth and which regulated their political affairs and provided for sanitary rules throughout the country.

"Exodus is the Book of Redemption. The chosen people are in hopeless bondage in the land of Egypt, having no power to deliver themselves. But God says: 'I have seen the affliction of My people, I have heard their cry, I know their sorrows; I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up into a good land,' Ex. 3, 7. 8. It is a beautiful picture of the soul redeemed from the bondage of Egypt into the glorious liberty of the children of God. God is revealed to us as the Deliverer and Leader of His people, a God near at hand, dwelling among them, concerned with the affairs of their daily life." (Hodgkin.)

The Book of Exodus is especially rich in Messianic types and symbols. The burning bush, chap. 3, is a picture of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Passover lamb, chap. 12, is a type of Christ and His redemption, 1 Cor. 5, 7. 8; 1 Pet. 1, 18. 19. The manna, chap. 16, is a type which Jesus applies to Himself, John 6, 48—51, when He says: "I am the Bread of Life." The smitten rock, chap. 17, is referred to 1 Cor. 10, 4: "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." Moses himself, the central personage of Exodus, is a type of the great Prophet of the New Testament, Deut. 18, 15. 18. The high priest Aaron was a type of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, whose atoning sacrifice reconciled the whole world to God. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, built according to the design furnished by God Himself, was a picture and shadow of heavenly things, Heb. 8, 5. It was the outward sign of God's presence, God's tent in the midst of the tents of the children of Israel, the meeting-place between God and man.

The contents of the book may be briefly summarized: The departure out of Egypt, including the narrative of the oppression, of the birth and education of Moses, of his flight, call, and equipment, of the ten plagues, of the institution of the Passover, of the passage through the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh; the wilderness journey to Mount Sinai, including the stop at Marah, the quails, manna, water from the rock, the battle with Amalek; the solemn legislation on Mount Sinai, including the preparations, the Ten Commandments, the rights of Israel, and the making of the covenant; the building and the dedication of the Tabernacle, including the sin of Aaron and the people, the making of the Tabernacle coverings and appointments, the erection and the dedication of the Tabernacle.[1])

1) Cp. *Concordia Bible Class*, Feb., 1919; Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 24. 25.

CHAPTER 1.

The Oppression of Israel in Egypt.

THE RAPID GROWTH OF THE PEOPLE. — V. 1. **Now these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob:** V. 2. **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,** v. 3. **Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,** v. 4. **Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.** V. 5. **And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls; for Joseph was in Egypt already.** The order is: the sons of Leah, the son of Rachel, the sons of Rachel's handmaid, the sons of Leah's handmaid. As in Gen. 46, 27, seventy souls are mentioned as the forefathers of the children of Israel, it being expressly stated that the sons came, each with his family, with his wife and children. The small number serves as a fine contrast over against the immense multitude that is spoken of at the time of the Exodus. V. 6. **And Joseph died, and all his brethren and all that generation.** Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years, Gen. 50, 26, apparently the first one of the brothers to be taken away; but he was soon followed by the other members of his own generation, Levy dying about twenty years after him, Ex. 6, 16. V. 7. **And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.** The heaping of the expressions, five different terms being used to emphasize this point, indicates the extraordinary growth of the people, a factor brought about not only by natural fertility and the eagerness for children, but above all by the fulfilment of God's promise to all the patriarchs. They filled the entire land, particularly Goshen, so that the country swarmed with their numbers. God's promises never fail, and it is a matter of wisdom to trust in them with firm confidence.

PHARAOH PLANS TO CURB THE GROWTH. — V. 8. **Now there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph.** The expression "arose up" indicates either that the new Pharaoh adopted entirely new policies with reference to the strange people within the boundaries of his land, or that a new dynasty was founded by conquest or by the overthrow of that which had been friendly to the people of Joseph, the savior of Egypt. This new Pharaoh knew not Joseph, either because he was entirely unfamiliar with the history of the strange people in Goshen, or because he deter-

mined to set aside the high regard in which the strangers had been held. A careful comparison of Biblical and secular history seems to show that Thothmes I must have been the Pharaoh of the oppression, while the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Amenhotep II. V. 9. **And he said unto his people,** to the high officials and representatives of the people, who were his counselors, **Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we.** This was an exaggeration to emphasize the unwelcome growth of the Israelites which showed the abject fear of the despot. V. 10. **Come on, let us deal wisely with them,** make use of political sagacity combined with despotic craftiness and malice, **lest they multiply, and it come to pass that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.** The children of Israel were no citizens of Egypt, they had never become Egyptianized, neither in language nor in religion nor in customs, and so the new despot scented a danger which his policy bade him remove in time. He did not fear the conquest of his own country, but merely the departure of the Jews in case of a war. He considered the Israelites subject to his jurisdiction to the extent of treating them as serfs and bondmen. V. 11. **Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens.** The counselors advised impressing the Israelites into peonage, practically into slavery, by setting officers over them, the purpose being to enfeeble the people, both in body and mind, by enforced labor, to take the heart out of them by the grievousness of their burdens. **And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.** Certain cities had been set aside as places to store the annual tax of the harvest which Joseph had introduced, Pithom, which was situated on the canal connecting the Nile with the Arabian Gulf, and Raamses, later known as Heroopolis, in Goshen, about twenty-two miles east of Pithom, as nearly as may be determined at the present time. V. 12. **But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.** God spoiled the success of the Egyptians' plans by continuing to bless the Israelites in spite of all the measures intended to destroy their fruitfulness. **And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.** They were not merely disgusted at them, but they felt an increasing horror of the mysterious power that was aiding the children of Israel. V. 13. **And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor;** v. 14. **and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field; all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor.** Chagrined at the failure of their first plan, the Egyptians added ill treatment and cruelty to oppression. Two new forms of service were laid upon them, brick-making, which included both the preparing of the clay and the drying of the brick, and the hard field labor on the soil which had to be irrigated. Thus all the work which the Egyptians performed through the Israelites was done under hard pressure upon the latter. To this day tribulation and persecution is the lot of the people of God, but such crosses bring them only blessing and gain.

The Command to Kill All the Male Children. — V. 15. **And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah,** their names being recorded to their lasting honor; v. 16. **and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools,** in determining the sex; **if it be a son, then ye shall kill him,** the male children should be killed right after birth; **but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.** Whether these two women were the only midwives in Israel, or whether they were the heads of the order of midwives, is immaterial; the devilish command to use inhuman violence referred to all male children among the Hebrews. V. 17. **But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.** They placed the reverential fear of God before the slavish fear of the tyrant. V. 18. **And the king of Egypt called for the midwives,** he stormed at them with an angry cry, **and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?** V. 19. **And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively,** full of life and energy, **and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.** This was not a mere evasion or deception, but agreed with the general experience, although in this case an untruth would have been defensible. V. 20. **Therefore God dealt well with the midwives,** gave them evidence of His goodness; **and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty** under their ministrations, the remarkable growth of the children of Israel continued. V. 21. **And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses.** He blessed them with abundant prosperity. V. 22. **And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born** (to the Hebrews) **ye shall cast into the river** (Nile), **and every daughter ye shall save alive.** Since his first plan had failed, he made use of open, violent brutality in not only giving permission, but even a command that his people might at any time drown the male babies of the Israelites. No Christian will permit himself to be made the instrument of a tyrant who seeks to destroy the Church of God. And it will be found that it is to the advantage of believers to obey God rather than men, even here in time.

CHAPTER 2.

The Birth, Upbringing, Flight, and Marriage of Moses.

THE BIRTH OF MOSES. — V. 1. **And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.** Amram, a grandson of Levi, married his aunt Jochebed, the daughter of Levi; in spite of the troublous times he had dared to enter into the state of marriage, and the marriage, as the later history shows, had been blessed with a daughter and a son. The special reference is here to the time when the cruel mandate of Pharaoh went into effect. V. 2. **And the woman conceived, and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child,** a handsome, well-proportioned baby, that also gave promise of fine development, **she hid him three months,** in the hope of saving his life somehow, Acts 7, 20; Heb. 11, 23. V. 3. **And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.** When it became increasingly difficult to hide the boy from the eyes and ears of prying Egyptians, the mother constructed for him a small chest, or ark, out of the papyrus reeds that grew on the banks of the Nile, making it water-tight by means of asphalt and pitch, and placed this in the rushes on the brink of the river. V. 4. **And his sister stood afar off to wit what would be done with him.** Miriam had thus reached an age at which she could volunteer to watch over the baby, to find out what would happen to him. The place chosen by the anxious mother was one frequented by the daughter of Pharaoh for bathing, and this fact entered into her plans. She trusted in the Lord that He would take care of her son, for faith will dare many things for the sake of a thing which has the approval of God.

MOSES ADOPTED BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. — V. 5. **And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river,** for such bathing in the open stream accords well with the customs of ancient Egypt; **and her maidens, the attending slaves, walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.** The other maids being engaged in patrolling the neighborhood against any disturbance, the attendant of the princess was sent to get the chest which had aroused the curiosity of Pharaoh's daughter. V. 6. **And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.** She guessed the reason for the exposure of the child at once, but the natural motherly feeling asserted itself; she was filled with loving pity for the lonely, hungry child. V. 7. **Then said his sister,** who had quietly drawn near during the excitement, **to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for thee?** She managed to make her question so casual that no one suspected her of being in the neighborhood by design, and her inquiry contained just enough of the suggestion necessary to direct the thoughts of Pharaoh's daughter as she wished matters to proceed. V. 8. **And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go.** In her deep pity for the crying child she readily acted upon the suggestion offered her. **And the maid went and called the child's mother,** the best arrangement that could have been devised. V. 9. **And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, carry it away with you, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.** So the boy's own mother was engaged to be his nurse, obviously by the dispensation of God. **And the woman took the child, and nursed it.** V. 10. **And the child grew,** he reached the age at which he was weaned, **and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son,** was formally adopted by the princess, but not before he had been informed of his descent and of his deliverance, for with his mother's milk he drank in the Hebrew spirit. **And she called his name Moses; and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.** This Egyptian name, Mousheh, which means saved, that is, delivered from the water, became in the Hebrew Mosheh, which means deliverer, a name with prophetic significance. As the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter Moses was educated according to the highest Egyptian standards, and became mighty in words and deeds, Acts 7, 22. Thus God holds His sheltering hand over them that are His and saves them in the midst of great perils.

MOSES ATTEMPTS TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE. — V. 11. **And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.** Moses grew to manhood fully conscious of his derivation, and therefore an Israelite at heart, although a prince of the nation to all appearances. The Israelites were his brethren, as the text emphasizes by the repetition of the word, and the enforced labor under which they were groaning hurt him deeply. He restrained himself, however, until he saw an Egyptian overseer strike down a Hebrew workman. V. 12. **And he looked this way and that way,** to be sure that there were no unwelcome witnesses present, **and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian,** thus avenging the murder which the latter had just committed, **and hid him in the sand.** Although the act of Moses cannot be labeled

murder, Acts 7, 24. 25, yet he anticipated divine providence by his rash act. V. 13. **And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together, they were engaged in a fight; and he said to him that did the wrong, the one that was in the wrong in the quarrel, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?** V. 14. **And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?** He plainly told Moses that he had no business to interfere, not having any authority over the Israelites. **Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?** So there must have been a witness on the previous day who had escaped the watchful eye of Moses. **And Moses feared and said, Surely this thing is known.** How did this matter become known? V. 15. **Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.** The land of the Midianites had no definite boundaries, but may be said to have extended eastward from the Aelanitic Gulf; some tribes, however, were found on the Peninsula of Sinai. He chose this country for his sojourn, pitching his tent near a well, apparently the only source of water for a long distance. This experience of Moses was to serve him in good stead in later years, for it is God's way of preparing great men for their life's work.

MOSES IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN. — V. 16. **Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.** This man is called a priest, but the Midianites apparently had not retained the pure religion of Abraham, chap. 4, 25. 26, although the tradition of the true God persisted, as the name Reuel shows. The seven daughters of this priest, as dwellers in the wilderness, performed the work which the unmarried daughters of the Arab tribes do to this day. V. 17. **And the shepherds came and drove them away, for the saying that might makes right held good in the wilderness; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.** V. 18. **And when they came to Reuel, their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?** It seems that the shepherds made ungallant behavior their daily practise. V. 19. **And they said, An Egyptian, for as such they regarded Moses from his dress and probably from his speech, delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock.** In comparing this passage with Num. 10, 29 and Ex. 18, it should be noted that Reuel (friend of God) was the given name of this priest and Jethro, or Jether, his official title, while Hobab was the name of his son, the brother-in-law of Moses. V. 20. **And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him that he may eat bread.** They had offended against desert hospitality in not inviting Moses to the home of their father, especially after he had shown them such kindness. V. 21. **And Moses was content to dwell with the man, he consented to accept the urgent invitation; and he gave Moses Zipporah, his daughter.** V. 22. **And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom** (always a sojourner, ever a stranger); **for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.** The birth of this son is of particular interest, inasmuch as at various times the Lord threatened to destroy the children of Israel and to make the descendants of Moses a great nation. Through the long period of trial and humiliation Moses clung to his faith in the true God and learned to submit unconditionally to the will of God.

THE LORD RESOLVES TO DELIVER ISRAEL. — V. 23. **And it came to pass in process of time that the king of Egypt died,** the Pharaoh on whose account Moses had found it necessary to flee; **and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.** This was many days, about forty years, after the flight of Moses. The oppression of the children of Israel continued also under the new Pharaoh, and since they had hoped for some relief, their crying arose to heaven with all the greater fervency. V. 24. **And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.** He had, of course, never forgotten it, but He took occasion to reflect and to act upon it. V. 25. **And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.** He looked into the case and was constrained to interfere in behalf of His people. When God's hour of deliverance has come, He always sees to it that the temptation is speedily brought to a close.

CHAPTER 3.

The Call of Moses.

THE BURNING BUSH. — V. 1. **Now Moses kept,** was pasturing, **the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian,** whose given name was Reuel, chap. 2, 18; **and he led the flock to the backside of the desert,** beyond the wilderness which separated the country of the Midianites from the Sinaitic mountain range, **and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb,** named so here on account of its later importance in the history of Israel. Even after the lower valleys are dried up, the upper regions of these mountains are still green with rich pastures. V. 2. **And the**

Angel of the Lord, the Son of God Himself, appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, the fire being a symbol of the purifying affliction and of the chastening justice of God. **And he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.** The obvious miracle of a desert thorn-bush which was burning, while at the same time the flames left it intact, drew and held his attention. V. 3. **And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.** It was an appearance or vision decidedly worth investigating. V. 4. **And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.** So the Angel of the Lord of v. 2 is here identified with Jehovah, with God Himself, who addresses Moses with words of solemn warning. V. 5. **And He said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.** The places where the Lord deigns to appear to sinful men are ever afterward set apart in their eyes and may not be desecrated by irreverent behavior, for man owes to God the highest degree of veneration. Throughout the Orient, the custom of removing the shoes before entering into a place dedicated to divine service, whether true or false, is still observed. V. 6. **Moreover, He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.** This was the formal declaration of majesty and power. Where deliverance, salvation, is required, there the Angel of the Lord, Jehovah, the mighty God Himself, must come to the rescue of weak and sinful men. But where God is present and visits His children in mercy, there the safety of all those that put their trust in Him is assured. **And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.** Sinful man cannot endure the sight of the holy God, and the eye is naturally overcome by the splendor which reflects the glory of the Lord.

THE COMMAND TO GO TO EGYPT. — V. 7. **And the Lord said, I have surely seen,** "seeing I have seen," a very emphatic expression, **the affliction of My people which are in Egypt,** the burdens which they were forced to bear, **and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters,** in the presence of the cruel drivers; **for I know their sorrows,** the pains and the suffering which they were enduring; v. 8. **and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.** Cp. Gen. 10, 19; 15, 18. The land of Canaan, which was now inhabited by the Canaanitish tribes enumerated here, was to the children of Israel the Land of Promise, a good land on account of its great fertility, and a large or wide land in contrast to the present condition of oppression in the land of Egypt, a land overflowing with milk and honey, supremely rich in flowery and nourishing pastures. V. 9. **Now, therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.** V. 10. **Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.** This was the object of the Lord's explanation, to make Moses the leader of the people in effecting their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Without the command and call of God no man should venture to undertake work in His kingdom. Even Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, Heb. 5, 5. 6. Moses received an immediate call from God; His method at the present time is that of the mediate call, through the congregations or their representatives.

THE EMPHATIC COMMISSION. — V. 11. **And Moses said unto God, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?** Moses certainly had learned humility in the school of Midian, not unmixed with dejection; all his youthful rashness was forgotten. "He who once would, when as yet he ought not, now will no longer when he ought." V. 12. **And He said, Certainly I will be with thee,** the presence, the power, and the wisdom of God was to accompany Moses; **and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.** This was literally fulfilled, for it was on almost the identical spot then occupied by Moses that the children of Israel were encamped when they entered into the formal relation of worshipers of Jehovah. But Moses had another objection. V. 13. **And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say unto me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?** The name God Almighty was too general to distinguish the true God from the idols of Egypt, and therefore the inquiry for the name has the purpose of obtaining some expression on the part of God which would indicate His essence and the actual manifestation of the divine essence toward His people, by which they might understand and apprehend Him. V. 14. **And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.** It is a majestic declaration in which God reveals His essence

to Moses as the unchangeable, eternally faithful covenant God. From past to future, from everlasting to everlasting, He is the same merciful Lord over all, without change or shadow of turning. V. 15. **And God said, moreover, unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is My name forever and ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.** Forward into the endless future, and backward into the past without beginning: there is only that one true God as He should be accepted by all men. V. 16. **Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you,** visiting I have visited you, **and seen that which is done to you in Egypt;** v. 17. **and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction, the burden, of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.** The apparently cumbersome repetition of the name of God and the long enumeration of the Canaanitish tribes all serve for emphasis to bring out the certainty of the fulfilment. V. 18. **And they shall hearken to thy voice; and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us,** for the present revelation of God to Moses concerned, and had significance for, all the people; **and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord, our God.** This request was not a deception, but agreed with the plan of God, for because the Lord knew the hard heart of Pharaoh, Moses and the elders were, at the beginning, not to ask more than a leave of absence, for Pharaoh's denial of this petition would then reveal the hardness of his heart. God intended to make Pharaoh an example for all time.

The Promise of Deliverance. — V. 19. **And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.** The omniscient God knew that Pharaoh would not permanently submit to Him, not even after the ten plagues, but would deliberately harden himself against his better knowledge and thus invite destruction upon himself. V. 20. **And I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof.** The Lord announces that He will glorify Himself by means of great miracles which He would perform in the midst of Egypt, thus letting all men know that He was supreme. **And after that he will let you go.** V. 21. **And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall come to pass that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty;** v. 22. **but every woman shall borrow,** that is, ask, request, **of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.** By God's dispensation, the Egyptian women would show their Israelite neighbors all kindness in readily bringing forth all the jewelry and the vessels of precious metals which they desired, this spoiling of the Egyptians being intended by God to compensate the Israelites for the many years of serfdom and slavery. It may often seem that there is neither right nor justice in the world, but the righteousness of God will always bring deliverance to His children, very often with a greater blessing than they expected.

CHAPTER 4.

The Mission of Moses to the Children of Israel.

God Gives Moses Miraculous Powers. — V. 1. **And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.** The fear and anxiety of Moses here discovered another objection, that based upon the fact that the people were no longer accustomed to prophetic voices and would therefore not acknowledge his call. V. 2. **And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.** Moses held his shepherd's staff in his hand. V. 3. **And He said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.** The serpent was no delusion, but a fact, and looked dangerous enough to fill the heart of Moses with fear. V. 4. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand;** v. 5. **that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.** The simple shepherd's staff, according to the will of God, became the instrument by which Pharoah and his land were punished, for the miracle showed that God would deliver His people from the hostile power which was holding it captive. Moses received the commission, the

power, to overcome the might, the wickedness of Satan, and this fact could not be hidden from the eyes of the children of Israel: they were bound to acknowledge his call. V. 6. And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow, infected with the white leprosy, Lev. 13, 3. **V. 7. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.** Thereby the Lord signified that He intended to cleanse His people, the children of Israel, of the spiritual leprosy of sin by the sacrifices and purifications which typified the cleansing through the redemption of Christ. **V. 8. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, to its unmistakable evidence, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. V. 9. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river** (Nile), **and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.** The Nile was given the veneration of a god in Egypt on account of the fact that the fertility of the entire country depended upon its annual overflow. If Moses, therefore, had the power to turn this water of blessing into blood, he commanded a power which exceeded that of Pharaoh: death and destruction upon the tyrants was in his hand. The same almighty power of God is able to deliver us from every evil work and to give us the possession of the saints in light.

THE FEARS OF MOSES REPROVED. — V. 10. **And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.** The great fear of Moses now made him protest his oratorical inability, which made it impossible for him to do justice to the message of the Lord and therefore threatened failure to the whole plan. He lacked both the natural gift of facile speech and the practise before an audience, and this ability had not been imparted to him in the course of this conversation. V. 11. **And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?** The excuse of Moses might have weight with men, but not with the Lord, who has absolute power over all the senses, being able to give the full use of them or to withdraw this in whole or in part. V. 12. **Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.** It was an easy matter for the Lord to impart divine eloquence to Moses, both as to facility of speech and as to choice of the most fitting words. All reasonable objections of Moses were now removed. V. 13. **And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send.** The misgivings of Moses were still so great that he wanted the mission to be taken care of by any one else than himself. The weakness of his flesh was so overpowering that his words sound like a flat refusal. V. 14. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother?** The Lord implied that Aaron surely was more worthy of being called a descendant of Levi than Moses with his hesitation. **I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee, for the Lord had arranged for this; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.** Aaron could indeed make fine speeches, and he would be delighted to be connected with this mission as the spokesman. V. 15. **And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do.** V. 16. **And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be, to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God,** to make known to him both the form and the contents of his speeches to the people. As Moses, the prophet, speaks only what God commands him to say, thus Aaron was to defer to Moses in stating only what Moses told him. "He that has the Word of God and is a believer has the Spirit and the power of God, also divine wisdom, truth, heart, mind, and disposition, and everything that pertains to God." (Luther.) V. 17. **And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.** The shepherd's staff was to be a symbol of the divine signs which were to be performed by the hand of Moses. The Lord has patience with our weakness and does not expect too much of us, but strengthens us to remain steadfast in His service and obedience.

MOSES DISMISSED BY JETHRO. — V. 18. **And Moses went and returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive.** The faithfulness, the sense of duty in Moses would not have permitted him to leave the flocks in the wilderness and to go to Egypt without leave-taking, even for a short while. He told Jethro as much of the truth as the latter needed to know at that time, for he would hardly have found a complete understanding of his object and of the divine revelation in the home of his relatives by marriage. **And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.**

V. 19. **And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian,** for Moses apparently delayed his journey even now, **Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought thy life.** This disclosure was intended to reassure Moses, to take away the last shred of his hesitation, although his mind had been made up even before. V. 20. **And Moses took his wife and his sons,** Gershom and Eliezer, chap. 18, 4, **and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt,** he started out on his trip to the country of his birth, **and Moses took the rod of God in his hand,** for so he regarded the staff with which he was to perform miracles. V. 21. **And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand.** The first commission was here repeated and explained, in order to impress every detail upon Moses' mind. After his return to Egypt he was to perform all the wonders, all the terrible signs, which the Lord had placed in his hand to do. There would be need of great firmness and courage in dealing with Pharaoh. **But I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go.** In His omniscience the Lord here anticipates. He knew that Pharaoh would harden his heart wilfully and maliciously, would refuse to heed the successive appeals that would be made, and therefore God announces the final judgment upon the Egyptian king, the condemnation which would make it imposible for him to be converted in the end. V. 22. **And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My first-born;** v. 23. **and I say unto thee, Let My son go that he may serve Me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.** This threat looks forward to the last of the Egyptian plagues. The fact that Israel is called God's first-born son suggests, even here, that the Lord would later choose others, that He would gain spiritual children out of the heathen nations. V. 24. **And it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.** In the place where Moses and his family encamped for the night while on the journey, the Lord threatened to take his life by a sudden disease, because he had neglected to circumcise his second son, Eliezer. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and His people, and could not be omitted without grave consequences. V. 25. **Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, a stone knife, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, laid it down so that it touched the feet of Moses, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.** The entire incident seems to have been a source of great displeasure to Zipporah, and her words indicate that she considered her husband regained by the blood of her child. V. 26. **So He let him go. Then she said, A bloody husband,** or bridegroom, **thou art, because of the circumcision.** She vented her displeasure after the recovery of Moses was assured. It seems that this incident caused Moses to reconsider his intention of taking his family along to Egypt. At any rate, it was not until his return to the peninsula of Sinai that his father-in-law brought his family to him, chap. 18, 2. As circumcision was a sacrament in the Old Testament, so Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, and the Lord's zeal for the use of the means of grace is as great as ever.

Moses and Aaron before the People. — V. 27. **And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.** This showed that the favor of the Lord had once more turned to Moses. His wife was not in full accord with him and his belief at that time, but Aaron's coming would be a great comfort to him. **And he went, and met him in the mount of God,** on Mount Horeb, **and kissed him,** this cordial greeting being all the more natural since the brothers had not seen each other for about forty years. V. 28. **And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him.** Aaron thus became familiar with the situation just as the Lord had presented it to Moses. V. 29. **And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel,** as the Lord had commanded, chap. 3, 16; v. 30. **and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.** V. 31. **And the people believed,** they were convinced by the words of Aaron, as they were substantiated by the miraculous signs given to Moses. **And when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, that He had investigated their condition in the land of their bondage, and that He had looked upon their affliction, their distressing burdens, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.** The promise of the patriarchs was still alive in their hearts, they took new hope for the future, and they thanked God for the prospect of a speedy deliverance. This new hope at the same time welded the people together into one organization by making them conscious once more of their position. Thus the believers will ever accept all the promises of God in His Word with a thankful heart and place their confidence in Him without wavering.

CHAPTER 5.

The Increase of the Oppression.

THE TASKMASTERS INSTRUCTED TO BURDEN THE PEOPLE. — V. 1. **And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness.** Moses and Aaron here acted not only as representatives of the children of Israel, who had acknowledged their commission from God, but as the ambassadors of the Lord Himself. Their question distinctly stated by whose authority they were acting, namely, by that of Jehovah, the God of Israel. V. 2. **And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.** Although Pharaoh's answer was given with the understanding that the gods governed the countries, and that therefore the Israelites belonged under the jurisdiction of the Egyptian gods and had no business to have a God of their own, Pharaoh here showed an impious, selfish, blasphemous mind, and proved himself a religious tyrant. V. 3. **And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us,** He had disclosed, revealed Himself to them in glory, He, the ancient God of the free Hebrews. **Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord, our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.** The plea was that Jehovah would look upon their neglect to bring Him sacrifices as a deliberate act of disobedience, and would therefore come upon them, as their enemy, with severe punishments. Thus both ideas are brought out, that Jehovah was a jealous, and that He was a powerful God. V. 4. **And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works,** attempt to secure for them a vacation from their labors, release them from their duties? **Get you unto your burdens,** your servile labor. He addressed them as though they themselves were slaves, and at the same time intimated that their request was a vain pretext. V. 5. **And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens,** you want to secure for them a vacation, a period of rest, and their great numbers caused such a period to result in losses to the crown. The words reveal a boundless contempt for the common people. V. 6. **And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters,** the overseers who drove them to their work and while they were at work, **and their officers, saying,** v. 7. **Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore,** chopped straw being used for binding the clay in the bricks before they were dried in the sun; **let them go and gather straw for themselves.** In the past this straw had been furnished by the Egyptian overseers, and the Hebrew officers had kept a record of the work done by their countrymen. V. 8. **And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof,** the Israelites were to make and to deliver to the Egyptian overseers the same number of bricks as had always been required of them; **for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.** Thus Pharaoh ascribed their request to be allowed to worship their God to a lack of sufficient occupation, to the fact that time was hanging heavy on their hands. V. 9. **Let there more work be laid upon the men that they may labor therein,** literally: Let the service rest heavily upon the men and keep them busy therewith; **and let them not regard vain words,** let them not listen to the lying representations of that man Moses. Similar charges are preferred against the Christians to this day, namely, that they are restless, dissatisfied people, having only worship and prayer in mind and neglecting their duties as citizens — false accusations all of them.

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO PHARAOH. — V. 10. **And the taskmasters of the people went out and their officers,** the Egyptian overseers and their Hebrew subordinates, **and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.** The royal decree was to be carried out to the letter; not a single straw was to be furnished. The Jewish scribes, or officers, had by this time become willing tools in the hands of the despots. V. 11. **Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it; yet not aught of your work shall be diminished.** There is an emphasis on the pronoun: Ye yourselves go, not others, as heretofore. V. 12. **So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.** They did not even have access to straw-stacks, but were obliged to go out into the harvested fields and collect the stubble. V. 13. **And the taskmasters hasted them,** urged them forward vehemently, **saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks,** the amount of labor which had been allotted them day by day, for each day, **as when there was straw,** when the necessary material for binding the clay was furnished. V. 14. **And the officers of the children of Israel which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them,** as their own subordinates, **were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?** When the number of bricks allotted to any company of the Israelites was not forthcoming, because it was a physical impossibility both to provide the straw and to make the

bricks, the Jewish officers were held responsible and were punished. V. 15. **Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?** It was an attempt to protest against the tyrannical injustice of the measure. V. 16. **There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick; and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people,** the sin is that of thy people. Their cry was an indirect complaint against the king himself, whom they did not dare to reproach outright. V. 17. **But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.** He emphatically repeated his baseless charge, v. 8. V. 18. **Go, therefore, now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.** The unjust order was not only not remanded, but repeated by Pharaoh's own mouth, so that there could be no mistake about it. V. 19. **And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case,** literally, they were in bad, their position was now worse than it was before, **after it was said, Ye shall not minish aught from your bricks of your daily task.** The fact that the oppression of the children of Israel was increased in this manner was a last severe trial for them. God wanted to test their faith in the certainty of His promise regarding the deliverance which was near.

The Officers Reproach Moses and Aaron. V. 20. **And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way as they came forth from Pharaoh,** anxious to hear the result of the meeting with the king. V. 21. **And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you and judge, because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants to put a sword in their hand to slay us.** It was a reproach of bitterness and despair: Ye have made us to stink, ye have brought us into ill repute. The king and his servants now had nothing but ill will and abhorrence for them, and this feeling was bound to find its outlet in acts of cruelty, in punishment and bloodshed. V. 22. **And Moses returned unto the Lord,** turned to Jehovah with a cry of distress, **and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me?** It is an appeal coming from the depths of humility and despair, but also a prayer of faith which clings to the Lord in spite of all adversities. V. 23. **For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all;** the Lord had apparently taken no steps to bring about the deliverance of His people from the house of bondage. Thus the Christians will often be inclined to be vexed and impatient in the midst of the trials and tribulations of this world. But God is merciful and patient and does not withdraw His almighty hand.

CHAPTER 6.

The Renewal of God's Promise to His People.

The Lord Sends a Comforting Message. — V. 1. **Then the Lord said unto Moses,** in answer to his cry of anxiety, **Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.** That was God's answer as to the eventual method which would be adopted by Pharaoh in dealing with the children of Israel. He would not only dismiss Israel out of his country, but he would do so with impatience, he would expel them. V. 2. **And God spake unto Moses** in a solemn declaration, **and said unto him, I am the Lord;** v. 3. **and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them.** To the patriarchs the Lord had not revealed Himself in His specific capacity as Jehovah, although the name was not unknown to them. Now He wanted to give actual evidence, definite proof, of Himself in fulfilling His promises, in carrying out the conditions of the Messianic covenant, at least in its typical form. V. 4. **And I have also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.** This covenant had been made with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, as their history abundantly shows, while they were still strangers in the Land of Promise. But the time of four generations, of which the Lord had spoken to Abraham, Gen. 15, 16, was now drawing to a close, and so His words must now be fulfilled. V. 5. **And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant.** That was the second factor which decided the Lord, the lamenting, the wailing, of the children of Israel under the burden of their bondage in Egypt. V. 6. **Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord;** He wanted to prove Himself as Jehovah. **And I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm and with great judgments.** The expression "arm stretched out" is even stronger

than "arm of strength" of verse 1, since it is the aim of the Lord to reassure the people beyond the shadow of a doubt. V. 7. **And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.** This formal acceptance of the children of Israel as the people of the covenant took place at Mount Sinai, chap. 19, 5. 6. The Lord here repeats the definite statement that He would lead Israel out from under, entirely away from, the oppressive burdens of the Egyptians. V. 8. **And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage,** for a permanent possession; **I am the Lord.** This, then, was the Lord's threefold promise: to deliver His people from the bondage of Egypt; formally to adopt them as His people; to bring them into Canaan, their future possession. Thus the Lord comforts His children in the midst of their afflictions with the promise of the everlasting deliverance, whereby His covenant, His Word, remains alive in their hearts.

GOD'S CHARGE TO MOSES AND AARON. — V. 9. **And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel; but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage,** literally, for shortness of breath and for hard slavery. It was not merely physical affliction with which they were suffering, but their spirit was almost broken with the unendurable harshness of the treatment which they received. V. 10. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 11. **Go in, speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.** It was a direct command to lay aside all faint-heartedness and to undertake the task of delivering the people with all energy. V. 12. **And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how, then, shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?** He argues that if the less difficult was impossible for him, the harder task would certainly be far above his ability. He assigns the reason for his failure to his uncircumcised, his unregenerate lips, which made it impossible for him to transmit the words of the Lord to Aaron with the proper ease and fluency and in all their stainless purity. V. 13. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.** It was a comprehensive command intended to beat down the last feeling of hesitation which Moses still felt. It is no small matter to proclaim the will of the Lord to defiant, obstinate men, but when the Lord commands, His will must be done.

THE GENEALOGY OF MOSES AND AARON. — V. 14. **These be the heads of their father's houses.** The tribes were considered as branching off first into families, or clans, or heads of the father-houses; these again branch off into the father-houses themselves. **The sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel: Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these be the families of Reuben.** Cp. Gen. 46, 9; 1 Chron. 5, 3. V. 15. **And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman; these are the families of Simeon.** Cp. Gen. 46, 10; 1 Chron. 4, 24. V. 16. **And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari,** Gen. 46, 11; **and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred and thirty and seven years.** V. 17. **The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimi, according to their families.** V. 18. **And the sons of Kohath: Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel; and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years.** V. 19. **And the sons of Merari: Mahali and Mushi; these are the families of Levi according to their generations.** V. 20. **And Amram took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses; and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.** Cp. 1 Chron. 6, 1—3. Note that the sum of the ages of these three generations, plus the age of Moses at the time of the Exodus, is four hundred eighty-seven years; so there is no difficulty in making Bible chronology fit. Of the three children of Amram and Jochebed, Aaron was three years older than Moses, and Miriam was older than either. V. 21. **And the sons of Izhar: Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.** V. 22. **And the sons of Uzziel: Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri.** These were the cousins of Moses and Aaron. V. 23. **And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife,** a woman of the tribe of Judah, 1 Chron. 2, 10; **and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.** V. 24. **And the sons of Korah: Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korhites.** V. 25. **And Eleazar, Aaron's son, took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families,** the heads of the father-houses. V. 26. **These are that Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.** Although the heads of the father-houses of Reuben and Simeon were also mentioned, the genealogy was here inserted chiefly for the sake of showing the family relations of Moses and Aaron. V. 27. **These are they which spake to Pharaoh,**

king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt; these are that Moses and Aaron, Moses being mentioned in first place again on account of his leadership at the time of the Exodus. The men through whom the Lord performed such great works occupy a place of honor in the history of the Lord's kingdom.

The Lord Again Commissions Moses. — V. 28. **And it came to pass on the day when the Lord spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt,** v. 29. **that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I am the Lord; speak thou unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I say unto thee.** The narrative is here resumed with another emphatic commission of the Lord, in which He bids Moses transmit His exact words to Pharaoh. V. 30. **And Moses said before the Lord, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?** It is the same objection as in verse 12, declaring his complete unfitness for the task which the Lord had laid upon him. When the Lord calls, His servants should at all times heed His call with all eagerness and not consult with flesh and blood.

CHAPTER 7.

God's Judgment upon Pharoah Begins.

Moses as God's Ambassador to Pharaoh. — V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh,** He had given him authority as His ambassador, with power to carry out His judgments; and **Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy prophet,** by acting as spokesman of the revelations given to Moses. V. 2. **Thou shalt speak all that I command thee,** communicate the commands and the revelations of God to Aaron; and **Aaron, thy brother, shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.** That aim Aaron was always to keep in mind, to induce the king of Egypt to permit the emigration of Israel. V. 3. **And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.** Because Pharaoh would harden his heart in the first place, the Lord intended to punish him by leaving him in this sin of obduracy. In this way the glory of the Lord would be increased by the many miracles which were to be performed before Pharaoh. V. 4. **But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you,** on account of his condition of hard-heartedness, **that I may lay My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, the hosts that were to wage the Lord's battles, and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.** The Lord would judge, condemn, and punish the entire land of Egypt because the people consented to the sins of their king. V. 5. **And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt,** in avenging justice and in almighty power, **and bring out the children of Israel from among them.** V. 6. **And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they.** They accepted the commission given them. V. 7. **And Moses was fourscore years old and Aaron fourscore and three years old when they spake unto Pharaoh.** This concludes the narrative of the call of Moses and Aaron. Both of them now willingly placed themselves under the direction of the Lord, just as all true servants of God perform His will whenever He commands.

The Miracles in the Presence of Pharaoh. — V. 8. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,** v. 9. **When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you, then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.** This miracle, chap. 4, 3—5, was to substantiate the words of the ambassadors, to give definite proof of their divine commission. V. 10. **And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh,** the shepherd's staff which Moses had brought along and had entrusted to Aaron for that purpose, **and before his servants, and it became a serpent,** a large, poisonous snake. V. 11. **Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers,** the men versed in occult arts and witchcraft. **Now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments,** for the devil is also able to perform what seems like miracles, with the sufferance of God. V. 12. **For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents,** there being, to all appearances, no difference between the miracles. **But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods,** God thus indicating that He was the mightier. Cp. 2 Tim. 3, 8, where the names of the chief sorcerers of Pharaoh are supplied as having been Jannes and Jambres. V. 13. **And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.** The fact that his wise men with their witchcraft succeeded in imitating the miracle of Aaron was enough to decide Pharaoh against the Lord, the result being a hardening of his heart. Even so many an unbeliever in our days is confirmed in his opposition to the Gospel by the claims advanced by a false science.

The Plague of Blood. — V. 14. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.**

V. 15. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water, to the river Nile; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come, he should stand ready to meet him as Pharaoh approached; and the rod which was turned to a serpent thou shalt take in thine hand. V. 16. And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go that they may serve Me in the wilderness, chap. 3, 12. 18; **and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. V. 17. Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood,** not merely be given a blood-red color through the presence of microscopic animals or particles of red clay, but actually be changed into blood, that the river throughout the length of Egypt would flow with the liquid which commonly pulses through the arteries and veins of men and beasts. **V. 18. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.** With their life element taken from them, the fishes could no longer live, and their decaying carcasses would infect the river and cause an insufferable stench. **V. 19. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod,** the same staff which had served before, **and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood.** Thus not only the Nile with its various arms was involved, but also the canals of the Nile, all lakes or ponds that had been formed by the overflow of the Nile. **And that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone, in all pails, jugs, and tubs, in which water was kept for use in the homes. V. 20. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh,** who was thus to witness the cause and to note the effect, **and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. V. 21. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.** The Nile was the one source of fertility and life in Egypt, and therefore the Lord indicated by this miracle that it was an easy matter for Him to change all the blessings of the country into curses. The very Nile to which the Egyptians gave divine honor was subject to the command of the God of the Hebrews, and this fact was to be impressed upon them forcibly. **V. 22. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments,** probably over the water of the wells dug by the Egyptians, v. 24. **and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them, as the Lord had said. V. 23. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.** His heart was in no manner moved to grant the request of Moses and Aaron. **V. 24. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink;** they quickly dug wells in the hope that the underground springs were still pure or that the seepage water had not turned into blood; **for they could not drink of the water of the river. V. 25. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river,** for it was He whose curse rested upon the land, and the miracle had been performed in His power. The plague lasted seven days and may to this day be regarded as an example of warning to all unbelievers.

CHAPTER 8.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Plagues.

THE PLAGUE OF THE FROGS. — **V. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let My people go that they may serve Me.** This command became a formula in the course of the plagues and was intended to impress Pharaoh by its very repetition. **V. 2. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders,** the entire country to the extremest boundaries, **with frogs;** v. 3. **and the river,** otherwise the source of fertility and blessing, **shall bring forth frogs abundantly, it would swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs;** v. 4. **and the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.** As the frogs came up out of the water and the mire of the Nile, there was not a spot in Egypt safe from their clammy presence, not even the inner bedrooms of the houses, not even the large wooden vessels in which the Egyptian women kneaded the bread-dough, not even the very persons of the Egyptians: the frogs would persist in creeping everywhere. **V. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over**

the ponds, almost as in the first plague, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. V. 6. **And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.** There was one immense expanse of frogs as far as one could see. V. 7. **And the magicians did so with their enchantments, with their verses of incantation, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.** They could imitate the miracle on a small scale, but they were unable to remove the plague. V. 8. **Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, Intreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people.** He was forced to admit, not only that Jehovah actually existed, but that this plague was His punishment, and that He was the only one able to remove its horror. **And I will let the people go that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.** The promise was pressed from him by the great emergency which was upon him. V. 9. **And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me,** be magnified above me, an expression used by Moses to refer all honor to Jehovah; **when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy,** literally to cut off, to put away definitely, **the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?** The fact that Pharaoh was even permitted to set the time for the deliverance from the plague was to direct his thoughts to the superior power of the God of the Hebrews. V. 10. **And he said, To-morrow,** thinking, perhaps, that it would be impossible to remove the frogs in such a short time. **And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord, our God.** Moses hoped that the fulfilment of his definite promise would have some influence upon the king. V. 11. **And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.** As persistently as the clammy creatures had sought the company of men, so rapidly they would turn back to their natural haunts. V. 12. **And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried unto the Lord,** with a loud and insistent appeal, **because of the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh.** V. 13. **And the Lord did according to the word of Moses,** He stood by His servant in granting his request; **and the frogs died out of the houses,** literally away from the houses, **out of the villages,** or courts, **and out of the fields.** V. 14. **And they gathered them together upon heaps, by the bushel; and the land stank** from the odor of decay. V. 15. **But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite,** there was relief from the pressure of the plague and he could once more get his breath, **he hardened his heart and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.** Thus it happens even in our days that obstinate sinners will cry for help when the hand of God rests heavily upon them. But there is no real change of heart in their case, and as soon as they feel relief, they forget all their solemn promises.

The Plague of the Lice. — V. 16. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.** The insects referred to are very small gnats, which crawl on the skin, and even into the noses and ears, and inflict painful stings. These tiny animals were, by a special creative act of God, to come up out of the dust in countless millions, like the dust. V. 17. **And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.** The Nile had twice become the source of a plague, and here the very land which yielded such rich harvests brought forth an insect pest which was unbearable. V. 18. **And the magicians did so with their enchantments,** they also smote the dust while they murmured verses of incantation, **to bring forth lice, but they could not; so there were lice upon man and upon beast.** In this case the Lord did not consent to their imitating His miracle, and so they were unable to perform the apparently simple feat. V. 19. **Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.** They were forced to declare their impotence in the face of God's almighty power, to acknowledge that the God of the Hebrews was mightier than they. **And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.** In spite of all the evidence, in spite of the confession of his wisest sorcerers, he persisted in his obstinacy. Even the blind children of this world are obliged to acknowledge occasionally that God's punishments strike the world, and yet they refuse to repent.

The Plague of the Flies. — V. 20. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water,** the river Nile, probably for purposes of worship; **and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let My people go that they may serve Me.** It is a monotonous repetition intended to wear down the hard heart of the king. V. 21. **Else, if thou wilt not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.** As nearly as can be determined, the flies here referred to are the dog-flies or blood-sucking gad-flies, whose sting is particularly

painful. The grievousness of the plague, moreover, would be increased by the fact that the flies would come in such great numbers as to fill the land and cover the ground. V. 22. **And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there;** the Lord intended to make a miraculous distinction in favor of the children of Israel; **to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth,** therefore possessing absolute power also over the land of Egypt as the omnipotent Sovereign over all. V. 23. **And I will put a division between My people and thy people,** set a redemption in favor of the children of Israel, to deliver them from the plague; **to-morrow shall this sign be.** V. 24. **And the Lord did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt; the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.** Not only were the people tortured with the severe stings, as well as the animals, but the vegetation was attacked by the maggots that developed from the eggs deposited on it. V. 25. **And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.** The fierceness of the plague drove Pharaoh to this first concession, at least to grant the children of Israel a few days of rest for a sacrificial festival. V. 26. **And Moses said, It is not meet so to do,** to do so would have been against the rule which the Lord wanted to have observed; **for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord, our God,** for the Egyptians were highly scandalized if animals sacred to them were offered; **lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?** The idea of offering sacrifices to Jehovah in Egypt, where the true God was not accepted, was in itself an abomination to the Egyptians, and they would not have hesitated about making known their objections. V. 27. **We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord, our God, as He shall command us.** Moses refused to recede from his original demand in any manner. V. 28. **And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord, your God, in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away,** a restriction which he was cautious to add; **intreat for me.** He feigned a compliance which was far from that which the situation demanded. V. 29. **And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.** This was a warning against the trickery which Pharaoh had exhibited before, v. 15, and indicated that Moses was master of the situation. V. 30. **And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the Lord.** V. 31. **And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and He removed the swarms of flies, the obnoxious vermin, from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.** It was another miraculous removal of a plague. V. 32. **And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.** It may happen now and then that obstinate sinners will declare themselves willing to reform in the one or the other thing which is offensive to the Lord; but such outward changes do not affect the heart, which remains hardened in sins as before. There is only one thing for Christians to do, namely, to serve the Lord in the manner which He prescribes in His Word. All self-chosen worship is an abomination to the Lord.

CHAPTER 9.

The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Plagues.

THE PLAGUE OF THE PESTILENCE OF BEASTS. V. 1. **Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go that they may serve Me.** This was now the standing formula of demand. V. 2. **For if thou refuse to let them go and wilt hold them still,** hold them back, using force upon them, in spite of the fact that Jehovah had made known His will so emphatically, v. 3. **behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field,** the domestic animals of every variety, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep, upon the flocks; **there shall be a very grievous murrain,** a destructive pestilence, against which human skill would avail nothing. V. 4. **And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt,** set a sharp line of distinction; **and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel.** The fact that this exception of Israel's cattle was predicted and came to pass in just that way was to impress upon Pharaoh and upon all the Egyptians the unlimited power of the true God. V. 5. **And the Lord appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land.** This was further evidence of His omnipotence. V. 6. **And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died,** the various kinds were destroyed in such great numbers

that there was only a negligible quantity remaining, v. 19; but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. V. 7. And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. The words of the Lord had again been fulfilled literally. **And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.** He was further confirmed in his obduracy and incidentally showed his tyrannical disposition, since the plague, which struck chiefly his poor subjects, affected him very little, although he had convinced himself of the miraculous sparing of the Israelites. A person who is hardened against God will also lose his feeling of affection toward his fellow-men.

The Plague of Boils and Blains. — V. 8. **And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace,** soot from the ovens, **and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh,** who should again know the cause and note the effect. V. 9. **And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast throughout all the land of Egypt.** The soot, reduced to fine black dust and increased a thousandfold, was to infect both man and beast throughout Egypt with inflammatory pustules or ulcers, painful boils and sores, probably on the order of smallpox. V. 10. **And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven, and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast,** an inflammation coming to a head in pustules, filled with a watery fluid. V. 11. **And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians.** Far from being able to imitate the miracle in this case, the Egyptian sorcerers were not even able to protect themselves against the ulcerous inflammation. V. 12. **And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh,** He placed the curse upon him which his obduracy deserved, **and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.** If a sinner consistently rejects repentance and a change of heart, the Lord finally inflicts this obduracy upon him as a curse.

The Hail Threatened. — V. 13. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go that they may serve Me.** The same demand repeated, with maddening emphasis. V. 14. **For I will at this time send all My plagues upon thine heart and upon thy servants and upon thy people, that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth.** The threat in this case is more fearful, and seems to include all the remaining plagues, which were to be directed against the obdurate heart of the king, but were also to affect his servants and all his people, since they all consented to the sins of Pharaoh. The final purpose was to establish the fact that the Lord God of the Hebrews was the one true God in all the earth. V. 15. **For now I will stretch out My hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.** Pharaoh was even now doomed to death, and if the Lord had so chosen, it would have been an easy matter for Him to destroy him before this. V. 16. **And, in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up,** God intended to set Pharaoh forth, as it were, as an example before the whole world and for all times, **for to show in thee My power, and that My name be declared throughout all the earth.** The manner in which the Lord would carry out the punishment upon Pharaoh would reveal His almighty power and cause His name to be extolled throughout the earth. After this general, impressive threat the Lord turns to the specific case in hand. V. 17. **As yet exaltest thou thyself against My people that thou wilt not let them go?** There is a bit of terrible sarcasm here, that a puny man should so proudly glorify and exalt himself as to venture to set himself up as a dam against the will of God. V. 18. **Behold, to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.** Since the day that the Egyptians had been organized as a nation such an extremely heavy and devastating hail had not been experienced in the land. Pharaoh was given only twenty-four hours' time for reflection, to save himself and his people from the plague. V. 19. **Send, therefore, now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field,** he should put the cattle which had remained after the great pestilence in a safe place, and secure whatever part of the crop could be saved upon such short notice; **for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.** By adopting such measures of precaution as the Lord here advised, the Egyptians would be able to save at least a part of their property in the terrible destruction. V. 20. **He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses;** v. 21. **and he that regarded not the word of the Lord,** whose heart was not set upon the dire prediction and warning, **left his servants and his cattle in the field.** So the words of Moses and the plagues that had preceded the present one had at least produced a wholesome fear of the Lord, if they had not worked repentance.

THE PLAGUE OF THE HAIL. — V. 22. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, as a sign before all men that the plague was now to begin, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field,** plants of every kind, **throughout the land of Egypt.** V. 23. **And Moses stretched forth his rod,** his hand which held his shepherd's staff, **toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, He** gave forth voices accompanied with hail, as a most powerful revelation of His divine omnipotence. **And the fire ran along upon the ground** in the form of ball lightning which is particularly destructive; **and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt.** It is a sublime description of a thunderstorm accompanied with a terrific fall of hail, causing a devastation such as no ordinary storm will bring about. V. 24. **So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, in addition to the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.** V. 25. **And the hail smote, throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast;** they were not only struck down, but killed; **and the hail smote every herb of the field,** all the smaller plants, **and brake every tree of the field,** not only by stripping the trees of their foliage, but by cutting off twigs and branches. V. 26. **Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.** The Lord did not include His people in the plague. V. 27. **And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.** That was not the voice of true repentance, but merely of slavish fear, of abject terror, a confession intended only to secure deliverance from the destruction of the plague. V. 28. **Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.** He immediately attaches the condition that they should not ask for, nor extend, the time of their festival beyond the three days originally named. A truly repentant heart will humbly bow under the punishment of the Lord, and will not presume to say when the limit has been reached. V. 29. **And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord,** in a gesture of earnest pleading; **and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's,** that all the land and all the powers of nature are in His hand, that He controls them as He pleases. V. 30. **But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not fear the Lord God;** it was obvious that their repentance was not of the right kind. V. 31. **And the flax and the barley was smitten, that** was the extent of the damage done by the hail; **for the barley was in the ear,** the stalks had made heads, **and the flax was bolled,** it was in bloom. In their case, therefore, there was a total loss. V. 32. **But the wheat and the rye,** or spelt, **were not smitten; for they were not grown up,** they belong to the late grains. V. 33. **And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord; and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.** V. 34. **And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.** They added to their former sin and deliberately made their obduracy greater. V. 35. **And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the Lord had spoken by Moses.** The man who hardens his heart against the influence of God's Word thereby invites the judgment of the Lord upon him, making it impossible for him to repent in truth. The condition of Pharaoh's heart may also be seen from the fact that he broke his promise to Moses. Where there is no fear of the Lord, all obligations of morality and decency are discarded.

CHAPTER 10.

The Eighth and Ninth Plagues.

THE LOCUSTS THREATENED. — V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs before him,** v. 2. **and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son's son what things I have wrought in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord.** Since Pharaoh had hardened his heart in the first place, the Lord now gave him up to the doom which he had chosen for himself, and the last plagues had the purpose of completing his obduracy. Of this fact Moses was informed, lest he become discouraged. At the same time the Lord had His own glorification in view; for the children of Israel, throughout their generations, should preserve the memory of the Egyptian plagues, in order to keep the fear of the Lord before them all the time. V. 3. **And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the**

Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? Let My people go that they may serve Me. It is the same formula, but preceded by a threatening question, spoken in a much severer tone than heretofore. Would Pharaoh never learn to humble himself before the almighty power of the true God? V. 4. **Else, if thou refuse to let My people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast.** It is again a definite prediction, which marks the plague as a miracle. V. 5. **And they shall cover the face of the earth,** literally, the eye of the earth, which is pictured as looking upon man in the ornament of its rich vegetation, **that one cannot be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail,** all the plants whose foliage had been stripped, but which had recovered from the plague of the hail, **and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field,** the foliage and the fruit of the trees, down to the very bark. V. 6. **And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day.** Besides working utter devastation in the land, the locusts would, in addition, fill all the dwellings with their nauseating presence, thus proving themselves a pest upon men as well as upon vegetation. **And he** (Moses) **turned himself and went out from Pharaoh.** He added no appeal to his announcement, the simple statement of the fact coming with crushing force. V. 7. **And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us?** They compared Moses to a trap, or snare, for catching animals and birds, and themselves to his victims. **Let the men go that they may serve the Lord, their God. Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?** The blind obstinacy of Pharaoh was plunging the entire nation into destruction. Their advice was evidently that the king should grant the request and dismiss the Israelites. V. 8. **And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh; and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord, your God.** He acted as though he were ready to accede to their desire. **But who are they that shall go?** literally, "Who and who else are those going?" He wanted exact information on that point. V. 9. **And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord,** literally, "A feast of Jehovah is to us." It was again a simple statement of fact, for Moses was no longer the humble supplicant. V. 10. **And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go and your little ones.** That was bitter blasphemy, that Jehovah should be their assistance in the same degree as Pharaoh was dismissing them; for he had no such intention, and he defied the Lord. **Look to it; for evil is before you.** He meant to say that he saw through their design of withdrawing the people from their labors. V. 11. **Not so; go now, ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire.** He intimated that he had understood them as asking only for leave of absence for the men. **And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.** The tyrant acted in a purely arbitrary manner and against better knowledge; for such is the way of unbelievers in waging war against the Lord's people.

The Plague of Locusts. — V. 12. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts that they may come up upon the land of Egypt,** like a hostile military force, or like clouds carried by the wind, **and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left.** V. 13. **And Moses stretched forth his rod,** his hand with the shepherd's staff, **over the land of Egypt; and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night.** So it was really the Lord, the Performer of all miracles, who drove the wind from the eastern desert over Egypt. **And when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.** V. 14. **And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested,** settled down to devour and devastate, **in all the coasts of Egypt. Very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such,** for it was a miraculous plague from the Lord. This is shown not only by the fact that the locusts came from very far, the wind blowing for twenty-four hours, but also that they covered the entire land, whereas ordinarily they will attack only certain regions and then move on. V. 15. **For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened;** daylight was shut out by the density of the swarms as they came on; **and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; and there remained not any green thing in the trees or in the herbs of the field through all the land of Egypt.** It was a complete devastation of the land, a punishment whose severity had been increased over the preceding plagues. V. 16. **Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord, your God, and against you.** This is a distinct confession of sin, for Pharaoh was not lacking in knowledge of his transgression, but in willingness to repent. V. 17. **Now, therefore, forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the Lord, your God, that He may take away from me this death only.** Here was more hypocrisy; for Pharaoh did not

desire forgiveness of his sins in order to turn to the Lord for mercy, but only to be delivered from this terrible plague, which gave him a feeling of utter helplessness. Only this time he wanted to be delivered from the deadly ruin staring him in the face, an expression which afterward condemned him. V. 18. **And he** (Moses) **went out from Pharaoh and intreated the Lord.** V. 19. **And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts and cast them into the Red Sea,** on the eastern boundary of Egypt, where they were destroyed in the water; **there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.** This sudden deliverance was again indisputable evidence of the almighty power of Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews. V. 20. **But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart,** as He had said, v. 1, **so that he would not let the children of Israel go.** Jehovah was not yet done with His mighty miracles upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. The condemnation of obduracy was upon the king, and he was being reserved for the final punishment.

THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS. — V. 21. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.** Without previous announcement or warning this plague came upon Egypt as another sign of God's almighty power. It was a supernatural, miraculous darkness, so heavy that all light from whatever source was cut off completely and all men were reduced to the necessity of feeling their way. V. 22. **And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days;** v. 23. **they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days.** This was another sign of God's great anger and one of those that point forward to the last Judgment, a heavy, continuous darkness, which was not illumined by a single ray of light for three days. **But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings;** the land of Goshen, where they dwelt, was not included in the plague. V. 24. **And Pharaoh called unto Moses,** he summoned him in great fear, **and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed; let your little ones also go with you.** The cattle and sheep of the Israelites were to be a pledge of their return, for they were to be kept in certain designated places in charge of Egyptians. V. 25. **And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings that we may sacrifice unto the Lord, our God;** for that was the reason substantiating their request to depart from Egypt. V. 26. **Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind.** It was a bold utterance, such as behooved the ambassador of the most high God. And the explanation should have satisfied the king; **for thereof must we take to serve the Lord, our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither.** They would know what offerings the Lord desired only when they had arrived at the place where the Lord would reveal Himself to them. V. 27. **But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.** God's punishment upon Pharaoh was going forward without abatement, to the bitter end. V. 28. **And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die.** Thus the tyrant flew into a rage; having lost, he gave way to his temper. That is the final state of obduracy, if sinners repudiate the messengers of God entirely and will not hear another word of God's truth. V. 29. **And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.** He accepted the dismissal by answering: Just as thou hast said, let it be even so. It was the calmness of spiritual and moral superiority, the consciousness of having the Lord on his side, which gave Moses the courage to speak so at this time. If the believers have God's assurance of help, they will fear no evil.

CHAPTER 11.

The Last Definite Message of Deliverance.

V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence. When he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.** The plague which the Lord had in mind was to be a final blow of such severity as to cause Pharaoh not only to dismiss the children of Israel, but even to drive them out. V. 2. **Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver and jewels of gold.** This was one of the points which the Lord had mentioned as early as the time of Moses' call. The people were to demand of their Egyptian neighbors silverware and vessels of gold, jewelry of every kind. V. 3. **And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.** He influenced the Egyptians in such a manner as to make them willing to give up their most costly treasures. Thus it happened that, in a way at least, the children of Israel received compensation for their years of severe toil. **Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the**

people. This fact also had much weight in causing the Egyptians to part with their treasures so willingly: they stood in awe of Moses, because they saw the power of God in him. V. 4. **And Moses said,** he made this solemn announcement to Pharaoh before he left his presence with the confident answer of chap. 10, 29: **Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt,** He intended now to interfere personally in the affairs of Egypt, to execute judgment with His almighty arm. V. 5. **And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die,** all the natural heads and representatives of families, all that was first-born, **from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill,** the slave that was engaged in grinding meal on a hand-mill; **and all the first-born of beasts.** There would be no exception, from the highest to the lowest the Egyptians must suffer. V. 6. **And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.** The blow would be so sharp and would be so universally felt that the lamentation would arise on all sides, as it had never done in the same degree before. V. 7. **But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast,** the proverbial expression of a dog's sharpening his tongue indicating that not the slightest trouble would be experienced, not the least disturbance would be suffered by the Jews; **that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.** The just revenge of God will finally strike all the unrepentant children of unbelief, delivering them to death and destruction, while He holds His sheltering hand over those that are His. V. 8. **And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee,** literally, under thy feet, under thy jurisdiction; **and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.** That was a just and holy indignation, for it is no small matter for unbelievers to reject the Word of the Lord. Pharaoh's time of grace was now coming to an end, and the wrath of the Lord would soon descend upon him. V. 9. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you,** heed not even his last terrible threat; **that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.** When the Lord is finally obliged to resort to the destruction of the wicked, such righteous punishment redounds to the glory of His holiness and justice. V. 10. **And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh,** all those that have been related till now; **and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.** That was a part of the final punishment upon the obstinate king, a foretaste of the last terrible wrath and endless destruction.

CHAPTER 12.

The Preparation and the Departure from Egypt.

The Ordinances Concerning the Passover. V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,** v. 2. **This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.** This was the first and fundamental law for the congregation of Jehovah. Up to that time the children of Israel had reckoned their year in a different manner, even as they begin their civil year in the fall to this day. By God's order their church-year was to begin with the month of which He was then speaking, and all their church festivals were reckoned according to this new division of time. V. 3. **Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb** (or kid), **according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.** From this time the children of Israel were considered the congregation of Jehovah. Every housefather was to take, to separate from the flock, a lamb or a kid. The practise was afterward narrowed to include lambs only. V. 4. **And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.** If the number of members in any one household, including the children and the servants, was so small as to make their disposing of an entire lamb improbable, then two small families having about the same number of souls might unite. Custom afterwards fixed the number of participants at the meal at about ten to twelve, but the fundamental unit was the family. V. 5. **Your lamb shall be without blemish,** sound in body and limb, **a male of the first year,** literally, a son of a year, one born the previous year; **ye shall take it from the sheep or from the goats;** the choice at that time was immaterial. V. 6. **And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month,** separated from the rest of the flock, in order to keep it from contamination and infection; **and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel,** all the housefathers as household priests and representatives of the children of Israel, **shall kill it in the evening,** lit-

erally, "between the two evenings," at twilight. Custom later fixed the time at between three in the afternoon and sundown. V. 7. **And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.** The blood of the animal was drawn, kept from coagulating by constant stirring, and then applied to the door-posts by sprinkling or painting. V. 8. **And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.** Those were the three dishes expressly commanded by God, the bitter herbs being a salad of wild lettuce, endive, and other vegetables with which the roast meat apparently was garnished. V. 9. **Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs and with the purtenance thereof,** whole, not cut in pieces, no bone broken, and the entrails in place, although, of course, cleaned. The animal, as a whole, represented the unity of Israel. V. 10. **And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.** Down to the very last morsel the meat should, if possible, be eaten, that which remained in spite of all the efforts of the assembled household being consigned to the fire. The instructions were purposely exact and detailed, in order that there might be no misunderstanding.

THE PRECEPT PERTAINING TO UNLEAVENED BREAD. — V. 11. **And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet,** literally, "shod on your feet," **and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste,** in hasty flight, as such that were about to flee, in readiness for speedy flight. **It is the Lord's Passover.** These instructions concerned the celebration in Egypt and were afterward dropped as unessential. Only the name for the festival, the Passover of the Lord, was not changed, a perpetual reminder of the miracle which the Lord performed in delivering His people. V. 12. **For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord.** As the avenging, almighty Judge the Lord intended to traverse the entire land of Egypt, to strike down all the first-born, to punish the princes with the common people, and thus to expose all the Egyptian idols as helpless delusions. V. 13. **And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.** Thus the Lord Himself explained the meaning of the Passover. Wherever there was a sign of blood, as He had commanded, there He would pass by, or over, and the blow would not strike the inmates of a house thus designated to work destruction in their midst. The slaughter would come upon the land of the Egyptians only. V. 14. **And this day shall be unto you for a memorial,** the evening of the fourteenth day of Abib; **and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations,** a festival of commemoration from one generation to the next; **ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.** It was to be celebrated as the festival of Israel's redemption and of its being set aside as the people of God's covenant. V. 15. **Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.** This is the solemn ordinance relating to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was thus from the beginning connected with the Festival of Passover. The exact period of the seven days is later fixed by many further ordinances. V. 16. **And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation,** a solemn festival assembly, **and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you,** another service of worship; **no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.** That was the only labor which was permitted, that connected with the preparation of foods, according to the necessities of the day, the ordinance thus being less strict than that concerning the Sabbath. Cp. Lev. 23, 7. V. 17. **And ye shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever.** While the Passover commemorated the dreadful night of judgment and deliverance, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so closely connected with it, reminded the children of Israel of the Exodus itself, of the chief circumstances connected with the departure of their armies out of Egypt. V. 18. **In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.** V. 19. **Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses;** that was the order which was to apply for the future, when they would have reached the Land of Promise; **for whosoever eateth that which is leavened,** in any solid food, **even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land.** The naturalized, that is, the circumcised foreigner was obliged to submit to the ordinance in just the same manner as the native Israelite. V. 20. **Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.** The ordinance was certainly not lacking in clearness

and emphasis, for it was the intention of the Lord to symbolize the entire consecration of His people, as based upon their redemption.2)

The People Accept the Ordinances. — V. 21. **Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said unto them,** as the representatives of the children of Israel who transmitted the will of God to them, **Draw out,** select, take out from the flock, **and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover;** for the name of the festival was applied to the lamb or kid as the chief sacrifice. V. 22. **And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop,** a plant to which cleansing properties were ascribed, **and dip it in the blood that is in the basin,** which was caught when the animal was slaughtered, **and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin,** thus applying the blood as a paint. **And none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning,** as a measure of safety, for they were protected only inside the house, behind the blood of sacrifice. V. 23. **For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.** With the blood on their door, destruction would not strike them, not because the blood in itself had such extraordinary powers, but because it was the type of the perfect, holy blood of propitiation, that of Christ. V. 24. **And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever.** This precept concerning the Passover in its essential features was to be a fixed rule in their midst in their new home, an observance to be transmitted from generation to generation. V. 25. **And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.** V. 26. **And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?** v. 27. **that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.** Note that religious observances should not be performed in a mechanical manner, but with a proper understanding of their origin and their meaning. **And the people bowed the head and worshiped.** They accepted the words of the Lord in grateful adoration. V. 28. **And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.** This section is of more than usual interest to us Christians, because the Passover lamb is a type of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Christ was a true man, born of the Virgin Mary. But He was, at the same time, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. He is the Lamb which was sacrificed for the deliverance of all mankind. The blood of Jesus Christ protects us against wrath, against death and destruction; it reconciles us with God, it makes us members of His Church. This Lamb we should eat, we should receive Christ into our hearts as our Redeemer, therefore also purge out the old leaven, and be His own in sincerity and truth. Thus we obtain strength for our pathway through the wilderness of this world to the true Canaan above.

The Slaughter of the First-Born and the Exodus. — V. 29. **And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle.** It was a supernatural visitation, a divine punishment which was here meted out, in spite of all the attempts to explain the facts in a natural way. The very fact that the first-born only was stricken in every case, from the highest to the lowest, shows that it could not have been a mere accident of the Egyptian pest, nor would it have struck both man and beast all in the same night. V. 30. **And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt,** there was lamenting from one end of the country to the other; **for there was not a house where there was not one dead.** God's punishment spared none. V. 31. **And he called for Moses and Aaron by night,** the matter would not even wait for the coming of the morning, **and said, Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said.** It was now not a mere permission, but a royal mandate, which showed signs of extreme excitement. The children of Israel were to have free hand to act as they thought best, to worship the Lord as they had indicated. V. 32. **Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.** All the former conditions were forgotten, and his terror reduced Pharaoh to the state where he begged to be left the blessing of Jehovah as a guarantee against further plagues. V. 33. **And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste,** they almost resorted to violence in hurrying the departure of the children of Israel; **for they said, We be all dead men.** That is often the effect when God visits His enemies with such a terrible destruction, that even the survivors are filled with a dread and panic which sees nothing but death on all sides. V. 34. **And the people** (the children of Israel) **took their dough before**

2) For a complete discussion of the festival and its symbolism, and of all the other Jewish festivals as well, cp. *Syn.-Ber.*, Iowa Dist., 1919.

it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. "They had already put enough unleavened dough for seven days into the baking-pans, and carried these on their shoulders, wrapped up in their outer garments, or rather in wrapping-cloths, such as might be used for mantles or wallets." (Lange.) V. 35. **And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold,** costly vessels and jewelry, **and raiment;** v. 36. **and the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required.** The children of Israel simply demanded, and the Egyptians readily gave what was asked, glad, apparently, that they could give, if only it would mean the removal of the strangers out of their midst. **And they spoiled the Egyptians,** they took along all these treasures as rich plunder and as a well-earned compensation, as a blessing of God.

THE JOURNEY TO SUCCOTH. — V. 37. **And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses,** the neighborhood of the city or the district where they had been living in Egypt, **to Succoth,** on the edge of the wilderness toward the east, where the Suez Canal now passes through, **about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children,** the Hebrew word including all of those that did not travel on foot, but on beasts of burden or in wagons. The entire number of the people may well have exceeded two million souls. V. 38. **And a mixed multitude went up also with them,** a company of people that were not Israelites, a mixture of various peoples, chiefly adventurers of a low type, Num. 11, 4, a medley, a great rabble; **and flocks and herds, even very much cattle.** V. 39. **And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened;** these unleavened cakes were the only provision they had, for their deliverance came upon them much more quickly than they had looked for; **because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.** Thus they celebrated, for the first time, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And so the name of the Lord was magnified by this great deliverance, which remained a source of inspiration to the Hebrew poets for many hundreds of years, even as we Christians sing the praises of the eternal redemption which was gained for us by Christ.

FURTHER PRECEPTS CONCERNING THE PASSOVER. — V. 40. **Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years,** four long or ten short generations as they were then reckoned. V. 41. **And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord,** the great armies that were to wage His wars, **went out from the land of Egypt.** The departure of them all took place on the same day, on the fifteenth of Abib, the day after the Passover Festival. V. 42. **It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord to be observed,** year after year, **of all the children of Israel in their generations.** V. 43. **And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof.** The statute of the Lord confined participation strictly to the members of the children of Israel. V. 44. **But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him,** whereby he became a member of the Jewish nation and church, **then shall he eat thereof.** V. 45. **A foreigner,** a non-Israelite merely living in the country, **and an hired servant,** one merely engaged for a while, **shall not eat thereof.** V. 46. **In one house shall it be eaten. Thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house, neither shall ye break a bone thereof.** The idea of the communion and of the union was to be maintained, and the fact that no bone was broken pointed forward to Christ, John 19, 36. V. 47. **All the congregation of Israel shall keep it,** shall do and observe what God had here instituted. V. 48. **And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised** and thus be received into the Jewish Church, **and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof;** the privilege was limited to such as had accepted the Jewish doctrines, that believed in the God of the Jews. V. 49. **One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.** V. 50. **Thus did all the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they;** that became the custom among them in after-years, Num. 9, 5; Josh. 5, 10. V. 51. **And it came to pass the selfsame day,** this fifteenth day of Abib, **that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.** Herewith ends the story of the Exodus proper, and the story of the events following is next taken up. The people were now separated unto the Lord, to be unto Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This is true also of the New Testament Church until the end of time, as Peter shows, 1 Pet. 2, 9.

CHAPTER 13.

Various Ordinances Given at the Time of the Exodus.

Concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Sanctify unto Me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; it is Mine.** This is not said of the general sanctification of the people as God's own nation, but of the consecrating, of the setting apart, of the first-born, both of men and of animals, for the specific service of Jehovah. They were the Lord's not only by virtue of creation, but because He spared them in the great slaughter in Egypt. The first-born sons were to serve the Lord as priests, until this right was vested in the descendants of Levi, when they were obliged to redeem themselves by payment of a sacrifice of exemption; the first-born beasts were to be sacrificed to the Lord. V. 3. **And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage.** The Lord here repeats His ordinance respecting the Feast of Unleavened Bread with impressive solemnity, His name for Egypt being "house of slaves"; for that was the relation in which they had stood to Pharaoh and to all the Egyptians, that of practical slavery. **For by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place.** The expression is more emphatic than the usual "by a strong hand." **There shall no leavened bread be eaten,** not only during the present days, but also at every anniversary of the occasion. V. 4. **This day came ye out, in the month Abib,** the fifteenth day of the first month of the church-year. V. 5. **And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.** Thus the Lord formally instituted the Feast of Unleavened Bread, with the usual detailed description of the Land of Promise and the corresponding reference to the fruitfulness of this country. V. 6. **Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord.** Cp. chap. 12, 16. On the seventh day there was to be a special assembly for the purpose of worship. V. 7. **Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.** All foods in whose preparation leaven was used were prohibited so strictly that their very presence in the house was not tolerated. V. 8. **And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.** The use of the singular here places the duty upon every individual father and parent, for the children were not only to take part in the public services, but also to be instructed at home concerning the great miracles of the Lord. V. 9. **And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's Law may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt.** These are proverbial expressions denoting that the Israelites should keep the facts of their deliverance in their memories always, as the people of many nations wore bracelets and frontlets to remind them of certain religious duties. The redemption of the Lord and His ordinance concerning it was to be accepted with believing hearts and to be fulfilled with faithful hearts, with hearts conscious of the debt of gratitude which all Israelites owed to the Lord. V. 10. **Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year,** as often as these days recurred. Thus we Christians are ever mindful of the fact that we have been delivered from sin's and Satan's house of slavery through the redemption of Jesus, and that our debt of gratitude toward Him demands our purging out the old leaven of sinfulness and consecrating our lives to Him.

Concerning the First-Born. — V. 11. **And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as He sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee,** the Lord here laying special stress upon His faithfulness, which causes Him to keep the promises of His goodness always, v. 12. **that thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's.** The female children and the female young were not included in this order, but the male first-born, both of man and beast, was to be offered and consecrated to the Lord. Cp. chap. 22, 29. 30; Deut. 15, 21. V. 13. **And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb,** clean beasts were to be substituted for the unclean; **and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck,** for the unredeemed animal might not be kept; **and all the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.** The Lord later provided special regulations for the redemption of the first-born sons by means of a certain sum of money, Num. 3, 46. 47; 18, 15. 16. V. 14. **And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come,** at some time in the future, **saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage;** v. 15. **and it came to pass,**

when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast; therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the first-born of my children I redeem. The fathers of Israel are here represented as speaking collectively and as giving individual instruction to their sons, for the Lord did not want a mechanical observation of customs that were no longer understood. V. 16. **And it shall be for a token upon thine hand and for frontlets between thine eyes,** they were to keep these facts in remembrance constantly; **for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt.** It is well-pleasing to the Lord if His children at all times keep in mind the great acts of deliverance wrought by Him.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY. — V. 17. **And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go,** had dismissed them and sent them out of the country, **that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near,** which would have been the shortest, the most direct route; **for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.** The Israelites, disheartened and weakened by a life of servitude, were at that time in no condition to cope with the warlike Philistines. V. 18. **But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea,** by the southeastern route, through the desert; **and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt,** they did not go in irregular troops, like fugitives, but in marching order, a provision which kept their forces together and made supervision easy. V. 19. **And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you** in mercy; **and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.** Gen. 50, 25. This last order of Joseph had been transmitted from generation to generation, and the vow was now remembered in all its earnestness. V. 20. **And they took their journey from Succoth,** apparently nothing more than an encampment on the boundary of the desert toward Philistia, **and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.** Instead of continuing toward the east, they turned southward, along the western shore of the Bitter Lakes, Etham being located at their southwestern end. V. 21. **And the Lord,** Jehovah, the Son of God, **went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, to go by day and night.** V. 22. **He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.** Thus the Lord, in a miraculous manner, gave evidence of His presence to the children of Israel and guided them on their long journey. In the same way the Lord is present in His Church at all times in the means of grace, leading His children on the right path and protecting them against all enemies.

CHAPTER 14.

The Pursuing Egyptians Destroyed in the Red Sea.

PHARAOH PURSUES ISRAEL. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** saying, v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon; before it ye shall encamp by the sea.** Instead of proceeding on their journey into the desert, the children of Israel were to turn back, toward the west, and pitch their tents over against Hahiroth and Baalzephon, on the west side of an arm of the Red Sea. V. 3. **For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, their turning back from Etham might seem like an act of bewilderment, of uncertainty, causing them to march back and forth without definite object; the wilderness hath shut them in;** there was no road toward Canaan on the west side of the Gulf of Suez, and so the children of Israel would be held fast in the desert. V. 4. **And I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.** This was the final hardening which the Lord wanted to inflict upon Pharaoh, and it would result in bringing honor and glory to the Lord as the one true, just, and mighty God. **And they,** the children of Israel, **did so;** they encamped at a place where they were apparently shut in as in a prison, a fact which caused Pharaoh to plan their capture and return to their former slavery in Egypt. V. 5. **And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled,** the report of all the events that transpired was brought to him; **and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?** What foolishness possessed us that we let these excellent workmen go? The apparent aimlessness of the journeying may have caused Pharaoh to believe that the Lord had withdrawn His hand from the people, and that he would have no difficulty in recapturing them. V. 6. **And he made ready his chariot,** he had his servants hitch the horses to his own chariot,

and took his people, his army, **with him,** all the soldiers that were available upon short notice. V. 7. **And he took six hundred chosen chariots,** the pick of his supply, the flower of his army, **and all the chariots of Egypt,** whatever other wagons were available, **and captains over every one of them,** all the necessary officers. V. 8. **And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel,** he was blinded in his foolishness by the apparent helplessness of his former slaves. **And the children of Israel went out with an high hand.** It was not a case of secret flight with them, but of a bold departure in the sight of all the Egyptians. V. 9. **But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon.** The detailed enumeration of Pharaoh's host serves to emphasize the greatness of his destruction. It is thus that obdurate sinners deliberately close their eyes against the manifest works of God and force God, as it were, to execute justice and judgment upon them.

The Great Fear of the Israelites. — V. 10. **And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid. And the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.** As the attention of the Israelites was drawn to the pursuing host, they realized the desperate situation in which they found themselves: on the east of them, the sea; on the south, the mountains; on the northwest, the army of Pharaoh. Moreover, they lacked both the weapons and the courage for a successful stand against the armies of the tyrant. It was not a confident prayer which they sent up in this emergency, but a cry of terror. V. 11. **And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?** This was a mixture of bitter irony and unreasoning terror; for Egypt was rich in great sepulchers and monuments. They also forgot that they had received the revelations of Moses with grateful hearts and had willingly followed his directions. V. 12. **Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?** That had happened in only one case, chap. 5, 21, whereas the Israelites had otherwise been eager to accept the advice of Moses. **For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.** These were unjust reproaches and foreshadowed the subsequent behavior of the children of Israel in the wilderness. V. 13. **And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more forever.** This heroic confidence of Moses stands out all the more splendidly by contrast with the cringing fear of the people, as the Lord had not revealed to him the form which His deliverance would take. V. 14. **The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.** Moses knew that the deliverance which the Lord would bring about would be of a nature to make the Israelites hush all their laments; they would, in fact, stand by in idle astonishment while the Lord glorified Himself before them. V. 15. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me?** Although Moses was outwardly silent, his heart was praying to the Lord with anxious cries. **Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward;** they were to march straight ahead. V. 16. **But lift thou up thy rod,** the same shepherd's staff that had figured so largely in Egypt, **and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it.** He was not merely to cause an unusually low ebb-tide, together with a strong wind to hold the water back, but he was to separate, to cut apart, the waters of the sea, the purpose of the wind afterward being merely to assist in drying off the bottom of the sea. **And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.** V. 17. **And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them,** in blind obstinacy. **And I will get Me honor upon Pharaoh and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.** God's judgment upon Pharaoh was to redound to the everlasting honor of His name. V. 18. **And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gotten Me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.** Thus the Lord strengthens those that believe in Him in the hour of danger and tribulation by giving them the assurance that He Himself will battle for them and deliver them from all their enemies.

The Israelites Delivered, the Egyptians Destroyed. — V. 19. **And the Angel of God,** Jehovah, the Son of God, chap. 13, 21, **which went before the camp of Israel,** who led their armies, **removed and went behind them. And the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them;** v. 20. **and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them** (the Egyptians), **but it gave light by night to these,** the children of Israel; in its protecting capacity the cloud revealed a double character, an effectual barrier of impenetrable darkness to the enemies, a cheering and comforting light to the believers, **so that the one came not near the other all the night.** V. 21. **And Moses stretched out his hand**

over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. As the waters of the sea, by the miraculous power of God, were separated from each other, the strong east wind from the desert caused the moisture at the bottom to evaporate, thus making the ground dry under foot and enabling the children of Israel to march forward without difficulty. V. 22. **And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.** It is distinctly stated that the water stood on either side, not only on the south; neither did the waters merely recede in an unusually low ebb, for they stood like walls. Thus the angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him and delivers them. V. 23. **And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen,** their obstinacy making them blind toward all the dangers about them. V. 24. **And it came to pass that in the morning watch,** between three o'clock in the morning and sunrise, **the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud,** by some unusual manifestation the Lord struck terror to the hearts of the Egyptians, and **troubled the host of the Egyptians,** v. 25. **and took off their chariot wheels,** that they slipped from their axles, **that they drave them heavily,** with difficulty; **so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.** Now at last, when it was too late, they realized the true state of affairs. V. 26. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen,** upon the entire host which by this time was in the bed of the sea. V. 27. **And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength,** to its usual full level everywhere, **when the morning appeared,** before the face of the morning, as dawn gave way to light; **and the Egyptians fled against it.** They had turned back to flee to the west side of the sea and were met by the waters as they were flowing together from both sides. **And the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea,** He literally shook them out in utter disorder and confusion, driving them right into the face of their destruction. V. 28. **And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.** Cp. Ps. 136, 15. V. 29. **But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.** This statement is repeated in order to emphasize the greatness of the miracle which the Lord performed, and to set forth the climax of the punishment which had begun with the slaughtering of the firstborn in Egypt. V. 30. **Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.** Thus the Lord delivered His people, not only from the slavery of Egypt, but also from their entire host, which intended to recapture them. V. 31. **And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians,** they had concrete evidence before them of the manner in which God carried out His judgment upon the Egyptians; **and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.** The weak faith of the Israelites was strengthened in a miraculous manner, Heb. 11, 29, and they now, in consequence of the miracle, again placed full trust and confidence in the words of Moses, as the representative of God, the final praise and glory thus being the Lord's. Whereas death, destruction, judgment, condemnation is the lot of hardened sinners, of the enemies of the Church, the believers will be kept safe unto life everlasting.

CHAPTER 15.

The Song of Moses and the Continuation of the Journey.

THE SONG OF TRIUMPH. — V. 1. **Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance from their mighty enemies, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously,** He has set forth His great majesty; **the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea,** all the host in which Pharaoh placed his trust was overcome and destroyed in a few moments by the almighty power of God. V. 2. **The Lord is my Strength and Song,** the great might of Jehovah, or Jah, as the poet here abbreviates the name, is the inspiration of his song, **and He is become my Salvation;** to those that are His, He has granted deliverance from the dangers that threatened them. **He is my God,** emphatically: such a one is my God, for the true God is elevated and magnified beyond all idols; **and I will prepare Him an habitation,** I will glorify and praise Him highly; **my father's God, and I will exalt Him.** What God had promised to the patriarchs, especially

Abraham, regarding deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, had now been fulfilled, for the overthrow of Pharaoh's host marked the beginning of Israel's existence as a free people. V. 3. **The Lord is a man of war,** able to wage war successfully and to subdue all enemies; **the Lord,** Jehovah, **is His name.** V. 4. **Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea; his chosen captains,** the choice of his officers, **also are drowned in the Red Sea,** being submerged in the water. V. 5. **The depths have covered them,** the great masses of water, part of the mighty ocean; **they sank into the bottom as a stone,** without a chance of being saved. That is the first verse of this great hymn. — V. 6. **Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power,** has glorified itself in strength; **Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy,** utterly annihilated them. V. 7. **And in the greatness of Thine excellency,** of Thy majesty, **Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee,** destroyed Thine adversaries; **Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.** The breath of God's glowing anger, which ate the opponents like straw, may have reference to the look of wrath which struck terror to the hearts of the Egyptians. V. 8. **And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,** for thus Moses regarded the strong east wind which the Lord sent, **the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea;** for the walls of water stood up like frozen masses on either side as the Israelites marched through the sea. V. 9. **The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them,** my soul will get its fill of them; **I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.** The short sentences, hardly more than exclamations, vividly paint the certainty of victory which possessed the hearts of the Egyptians as they went forth in the overweening pride of confidence. V. 10. **Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters,** they sank from view like a plummet, and the rushing billows of the great sea bore witness to the glory of the Creator. Thus the second stanza of the hymn is concluded. — V. 11. **Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods,** among all those to whom men apply the name gods? **Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?** Jehovah, who performed such great miracles, which men could contemplate only with fear and trembling, had thereby given the guarantee that He would carry the deliverance of His people to a successful issue. V. 12. **Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.** The miracles which the Lord had performed in Egypt and upon the host of the Egyptians showed that a similar fate awaits all the enemies of the Lord, that no man can stand before Him as His opponent. V. 13. **Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed.** The deliverance out of Egypt was a proof of the fact that Israel was the Lord's people, the people of His redemption, but also that this miracle was due to His mercy alone, and not to any worthiness in them. **Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.** The past experience was a pledge of further mercies, and the prophet even now sees the people established in their inheritance, where the Lord would live in their midst in the beauty of His holiness. V. 14. **The people shall hear and be afraid,** be filled with restlessness and distress; that was even now the effect which the report of the mighty deliverance had upon the heathen nations; **sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina,** they would tremble with mournful fear. V. 15. **Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed,** will lose heart and courage; **the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them,** take a firm grip upon them; **all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away** in dread and terror. V. 16. **Fear and dread shall fall upon them,** a horror which would render them helpless; **by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone,** mute, unable to utter a word, to raise a single objection; **till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased.** The final entry into the Land of Promise was assured and could not be hindered by any attempts of their enemies to render it futile. By His mighty deeds God had purchased this people for Himself, and He intended to hold His property against all adversaries. V. 17. **Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.** In the eyes of the prophet all these things were even now accomplished; he saw his people living in Canaan, in the place which the Lord had chosen for them; he saw the Temple of the Lord erected in the midst of His people, as a place of worship to His holiness and mercy. V. 18. **The Lord shall reign forever and ever.** The singer here rises to the greatest heights of exultation and looks even beyond the temporal kingdom of Israel in the Land of Promise, to the eternal reign of the Messiah.

The Song of Miriam. — V. 19. **For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea,** the historian implying, at this point, that Pharaoh, riding forward at the head of his army, was destroyed with all his host, Ps. 136, 15, **and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea,**

in the bed which the sea ordinarily filled. V. 20. **And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron,** who from now on takes her place at the side of Aaron under the leadership of Moses, although she was endowed with prophetic gifts, **took a timbrel,** a tambourine, **in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances,** in a stately, solemn religious dance, with marching and singing in unison. V. 21. **And Miriam answered them,** she and her company chanted their refrain at the end of every verse, or stanza, as sung by Moses and the children of Israel, **Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously,** He has exalted His majesty; **the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.** Cp. v. 1. All the people, men and women, were thus engaged in the hymn of praise and thanksgiving, took part in the festival in honor of Jehovah, a fine example to the believers of all times.

IN THE WILDERNESS OF SHUR. — V. 22. **So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur;** they left the last fountain of fresh water behind them and marched out into the desert which extends along the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez, the western arm of the Red Sea; **and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water.** V. 23. **And when they came to Marah,** probably the modern Hawara, thirty-three miles from the place where they had crossed the sea, **they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter,** not merely saltish, but disagreeably repugnant; **therefore the name of it was called Marah** (bitterness). V. 24. **And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?** So quickly did the children of Israel forget the many evidences of God's mercy in Egypt and the miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea. V. 25. **And he cried unto the Lord,** for counsel and assistance; **and the Lord showed him a tree,** indicated some wood to him, **which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet,** as palatable and wholesome as the best drinking-water. In this way the Lord overlooked the weakness of His children and helped them out. **There He** (God) **made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them,** v. 26. **and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.** That was the test which the Lord proposed, namely, that the children of Israel should keep His commandments, laws, and ordinances. In that event He would prove Himself their true Physician in keeping from them the plagues which struck the Egyptians, and they could depend upon this promise as upon a definite ordinance. V. 27. **And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees; and they encamped there by the waters.** In this beautiful oasis the people had an opportunity to refresh themselves from the fatigue of the journey and to prepare for the continuation of the journey. Days of joy and comfort follow after periods of suffering and trial.

CHAPTER 16.

Events in the Wilderness of Sin.

THE MURMURING ABOUT THE FOOD. — V. 1. **And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai,** on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez, **on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.** V. 2. **And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.** Their dissatisfied complaint was directed against both leaders, and so against the divine act of bringing them out of Egypt, that is, against Jehovah Himself. V. 3. **And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt,** in the last great plague which cut off the first-born of the Egyptians, **when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full,** when they, in spite of all their other afflictions, at least had their food in sufficient quantities; **for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger,** which was an unjust accusation bordering upon insolence and, moreover, with an amount of falsehood, for they still had at least some of their cattle with them, and the congregation was by no means on the edge of starvation. V. 4. **Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day,** a certain amount day after day, **that I may prove them whether they will walk in My law or no.** The Lord intended to test their faith and obedience in connection with this miraculous gift of bread. V. 5. **And it shall come to pass that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in,** they should measure the portion very carefully and set it aside; **and it shall be twice as much**

as they gather daily. Cp. v. 22. V. 6. **And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt,** they would be given further unmistakable evidence that it was the Lord who had brought about their deliverance; v. 7. **and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord,** they would be given definite proof of His almighty power and majesty, of His glorious presence; **for that He,** God, **heareth your murmurings against the Lord,** Jehovah, the Son of God, who was the real leader of the people in its desert journey, 1 Cor. 10, 4. **And what are we, that ye murmur against us?** The persons of Moses and Aaron counted for nothing; it was as the ambassadors of Jehovah that they were here concerned; the people should realize that their complaint was directed against God. V. 8. **And Moses said, This shall be when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.** Thus the people were reproved for their sinful murmuring.

The Lord Sends Quails and Manna. — V. 9. **And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord; for He hath heard your murmurings.** Aaron, as the spokesman of Moses, was to make this announcement, giving the people the assurance that Jehovah had heard, and was ready to grant, the prayer included in their murmuring, in spite of the fact that it indicated a sinful weakness on their part. V. 10. **And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.** This appearance confirmed the reproof and the promise given by the mouth of the Lord's ambassadors, and incidentally indicated to them that God was able to manifest Himself in their midst even in the desert wastes which now lay before them. V. 11. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 12. **I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh,** between the evenings, at twilight, before nightfall, **and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, your God.** It would be another unmistakable proof of His almighty power. V. 13. **And it came to pass that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp;** they arose on the horizon in great masses, like a heavy cloud, their usual number being much increased by a miracle of the Lord. **And in the morning the dew lay round about the host,** all around the camp. V. 14. **And when the dew that lay was gone up,** that is, the heavy fog that accompanied the precipitation, **behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground,** like flaky kernels, Num. 11, 7. V. 15. **And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is this? For they wist** (knew) **not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat,** the miraculous, heavenly bread, of which he had spoken the evening before. V. 16. **This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man,** about two and one-half quarts per person, **according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents;** that was the average amount per soul, whether children or adults. V. 17. **And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less,** as every man's good fortune or his energy directed. V. 18. **And when they did mete it with an omer,** the measure which the Lord had given as the standard, **he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.** By God's miraculous arrangement the amounts gathered were just sufficient for each family and for the entire people. V. 19. **And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning,** in an attempt to hoard the food. V. 20. **Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses,** they again became guilty of stubborn disobedience; **but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank;** the tiny maggots that developed caused a rapid decay. **And Moses was wroth with them,** on account of their stubbornness. V. 21. **And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.** Thus the Lord provided for His people in their need, mercifully overlooking their weakness, even as He does to this day, as His children experience time and again.

The Sabbath Rest. — V. 22. **And it came to pass that on the sixth day** of the week **they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man,** about five quarts per person; **and all the rulers of the congregation,** the princes, or leaders, of the various tribes, **came and told Moses.** The strangeness of the happening caused them to wonder. V. 23. **And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said** (v. 5.), **To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord,** which up to that time had evidently not been observed. **Bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe;** they were to prepare and eat their meals as usual; **and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning,**

for use on the Sabbath-day. V. 24. **And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein,** which showed that the entire matter was in the hands of God's providence. V. 25. **And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field,** another proof that it was not the natural manna (which in warm weather oozes out of the branches of the tarfa-tree) with which the children of Israel were dealing, but a gift from heaven, sent at the direction of God. V. 26. **Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.** V. 27. **And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather,** in the same obstinate wilfulness which characterized the people throughout, **and they found none.** V. 28. **And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?** The people were giving a poor account of their faith in this trial of their obedience and heaping one sin upon the other. V. 29. **See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days.** That was the explanation repeated, which included the reproof. **Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.** That was the plain command, which permitted no evasion. V. 30. **So the people rested on the seventh day;** from this time the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath dates. V. 31. **And the house of Israel called the name thereof,** of the miraculous bread, **manna; and it was like coriander seed, white,** small, round kernels of dull white or yellowish green color; **and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.** Cp. Num. 11, 7. 8. It could be ground in a hand-mill, crushed in a mortar, cooked by baking or boiling, made into cakes or bread, and tasted like baked food. It is referred to Ps. 78, 24; 105, 40; John 6, 31—41.

MANNA SAVED FOR A MEMORIAL. — V. 32. **And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it,** a measure containing just that amount, **to be kept for your generations,** for all future times, **that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.** V. 33. **And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations,** for all future descendants. V. 34. **As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept.** The historian here anticipates an event of the future, for it was some time later that the Ark of the Covenant was made at God's command, the receptacle of the tables of the testimony and also of the pot of manna, chap. 25, 16. 21; Heb. 9, 4. V. 35. **And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.** V. 36. **Now, an omer is the tenth part of an ephah,** as the author adds by way of explanation, an ephah at that time measuring almost three and one-fourth pecks. This closes the account concerning the manna for the present. The entire story reminds us of the gracious providence of God, which takes care of all our needs and bids us not to worry about the morrow, Matt. 6, 34. If we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all the things which we need for this life will be added unto us.

CHAPTER 17.

Events at Rephidim.

THE MURMURING AT MASSAH AND MERIBAH. V. 1. **And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin,** after their journeys, after several days' marching, on each of which they encamped for the night, Num. 33, 12, **according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim,** on the boundary of the wilderness of Sinai; **and there was no water for the people to drink.** V. 2. **Wherefore the people did chide with Moses and said, Give us water that we may drink.** They deliberately challenged Moses for an explanation; they started a quarrel, they wrangled. **And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?** The second question was the explanation of the first, for in attacking Moses the people rebelled against the Lord and provoked Him to anger. V. 3. **And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?** So this was the substance of their complaint, of their doubt as to the merciful presence of the Lord. V. 4. **And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me.** They held Moses responsible for the impending ruin, and assumed such an ugly attitude as to cause Moses to fear the worst. V. 5. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river,** the shepherd's staff which was his symbol of

authority, **take in thine hand and go.** The solemn departure of Moses and the elders from the camp was to draw the attention of the entire army to their actions. V. 6. **Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb,** whose foot-hills extended down to the neighborhood of the camp; **and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink.** God assured Moses of His presence and definitely promised him a miracle. **And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.** They were witnesses to the miracle and could testify before the people as to the manner in which water had been produced. V. 7. **And he called the name of the place Massah** (temptation) **and Meribah** (strife) **because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?** So that had been their real transgression, the doubts as to the presence of the Lord with their army, the pillar of cloud and of fire apparently not being sufficient any more to uphold their faith. The events here narrated were considered an example of warning throughout the time of the Old Testament as well as in the New, Ps. 95, 8; Heb. 4, 9. And as it was Christ who journeyed with His people at that time and strengthened the faith of those who noted His presence in the miracle, so it is He who gives us at all times the true spiritual water to quench the thirst of our souls.

The Battle with the Amalekites. — V. 8. **Then came Amalek,** the nation which had descended from Amalek, the grandson of Esau, Gen. 36, 12, **and fought with Israel in Rephidim.** V. 9. **And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek;** for the soldiers of the heathen nation had fallen upon the rear-guard of Israel and smitten the faint and weary, Deut. 25, 18. **Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand,** the same staff with which he had performed so many miracles. V. 10. **So Joshua,** or Hoshea, a prince of the tribe of Ephraim, Num. 13, 8. 16; Deut. 32, 44, **did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek,** for these Edomites were here trying to vent their spite against the chosen people of God; **and Moses, Aaron, and Hur,** the son of Caleb, the great-grandson of Judah, 1 Chron. 2, 18—20, **went up to the top of the hill,** to assist their troops with the prayer of faith. V. 11. **And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand,** in the attitude of fervent supplication, **that Israel prevailed,** the tide of battle went in their favor; **and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.** It was not a battle in which mere prowess of arms brought about the decision, but one in which the powers of the true God battled with the enemies of His Church. V. 12. **But Moses' hands were heavy.** It is a test of endurance for the strongest man to hold his hands out or up for any length of time. **And they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side;** they supported his hands in such a way that they would not sink; **and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun,** until darkness put an end to the battle. V. 13. **And Joshua discomfited,** struck down, conquered, **Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword,** without exercising pity. V. 14. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua,** it should be revealed to Joshua and impressed upon his mind; **for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven,** the entire nation was to be annihilated, Deut. 25, 19. V. 15. **And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi** (Jehovah my banner); v. 16. **for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.** It was a vow with his hand upon the banner of Jehovah, the altar which he had built, that Israel should continue the war against the Amalekites until their total extinction had been accomplished. The present victory was an earnest of future victories over all the enemies. Thus all the enemies of the believers, of the Church of Christ, will eventually be conquered, but our prayers must arise to the Throne of Mercy without ceasing.

CHAPTER 18.

The Visit of Jethro.

Jethro Arrives with Zipporah. — V. 1. **When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law,** his given name being Reuel and his official title Jethro, **heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, His people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt,** v. 2. **then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,** which probably happened after the adventure in the inn, chap. 4, 24—26, v. 3. **and her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom** (a stranger I am); **for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land;** v. 4. **and the name of the other was Eliezer** (God my Helper); **for the God of my father, said he, was mine Help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.** These two sons had been born to Moses in the land of Midian while

he lived with his father-in-law Reuel, chap. 2, 22; 4, 25. It seems that Moses had agreed with his wife that she should meet him when he would return with the children of Israel; for he had had, even at that time, the promise of the Lord that Israel would be delivered out of the house of bondage, and that they would worship God on Mount Horeb. As the news of the mighty deeds of God, therefore, went out into the surrounding countries, Jethro also heard it and acted accordingly. V. 5. **And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God;** for the children of Israel had now established their camp in the foot-hills of Mount Horeb. V. 6. **And he said unto Moses,** sent him a message before reaching the camp, **I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife and her two sons with her.** V. 7. **And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him,** he welcomed him in a manner befitting his station; **and they asked each other of their welfare,** whether peace in the best sense of the word had been granted them. **And they came into the tent.** "Notice the delicate discretion which both men observe, with all their friendship towards each other. Jethro does not rush impetuously forward; he sends word of his approach. Moses receives him with appropriate reverence, but first leads him into his tent; for whether and how he may introduce him to his people is yet to be determined." (Lange.) V. 8. **And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake** while they were still in bondage in Egypt, **and all the travail that had come upon them,** that had found or struck them, **by the way,** since their departure out of Egypt, **and how the Lord delivered them,** how He had shown them His salvation in every instance, given them evidence of His almighty and gracious presence. V. 9. **And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.** It was not the mere polite interest of a visitor, but the genuine, sympathetic rejoicing of a man who felt that the God of Israel was the true God. Jethro here appears as the representative of a heathen nation, of the Midianites or Kenites, the first heathen nation to show kindness to the people of God. V. 10. **And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord,** Jehovah, the true God, **who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians;** it had been a salvation from galling bondage. V. 11. **Now I know that the Lord,** Jehovah, the God whom Moses and the children of Israel worshiped, **is greater than all gods,** having manifested Himself as being exalted above all so-called gods, the idols of the heathen; **for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them.** The Egyptians, foolishly trusting in their idols, had acted wickedly in all their dealings with the Israelites, but the Lord had shown His superiority in the plagues which He had sent, down to the final annihilation of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. V. 12. **And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God,** the belief in whom he had so openly confessed, giving evidence of his faith by this act of sacrifice. **And Aaron came and all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.** The children of Israel could enter into both religious and social fellowship with the man who had so openly confessed his belief in the true God. Eating bread before God was said of the sacrificial meal, the Lord being present as the invisible Guest. As Jethro here partook of the blessings of Israel, so heathen nations in after-years were called to the enjoyment of the Messianic hope and promises.

JETHRO'S ADVICE TO MOSES. — V. 13. **And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people,** to hear cases, to adjust differences and give advice. **And the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.** The number of the people being so great, there were many matters to adjust and many difficulties to untangle, and it took a great deal of Moses' time and energy. V. 14. **And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?** In brief: What is the idea, what is the object of your doing all this work alone; why try to bear the great burden without assistance? V. 15. **And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God.** Moses was God's ambassador to the people, God's visible representative, and so the people came to him for divine decisions in all matters of contention, and when they needed advice. V. 16. **When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and His laws.** By giving advice in all difficult matters and by rendering decisions in all disputes, Moses made known to the people the ordinances and the laws of God. V. 17. **And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.** The practise which had been inaugurated by Moses was not good policy. V. 18. **Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee.** Moses would use up, and thus waste, all his strength and energy, and the people would be worn out with the chafing of suspense as they waited. **For this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not**

able to perform it thyself alone. It was a plain case of the limitation of physical strength, and Jethro's advice was good political wisdom, sound common sense. V. 19. **Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee;** Jethro knew that his advice would meet with the approval of God. **Be thou for the people to Godward that thou mayest bring the causes unto God;** Moses was to represent the people in all cases in which they sought right and justice before God; he was to take the place of God toward the people, the visible representative of the real Ruler of Israel. V. 20. **And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them,** let them know, teach them, **the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.** Moses was to retain for himself the instruction of the people, both as to their general behavior and mode of living and as to their course in individual matters; he was to be their teacher in all questions of principle. V. 21. **Moreover, thou shalt provide,** look for, select, **out of all the people able men,** men of strength of body and men of energy, **such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness,** distinguished for their lack of selfishness; **and place such over them to be rulers of thousands and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens,** the decimal system probably being taken since ten represented the average size of a family. V. 22. **And let them judge the people at all seasons,** according to the degree of importance and difficulty; **and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee,** such as were too difficult for them to decide, **but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself,** he would relieve himself of some of the burden resting upon him, **and they shall bear the burden with thee,** assist Moses in the business of having charge of such a great people. V. 23. **If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure,** to hold out under the burden resting upon him, **and all this people shall go to their place in peace,** reach their destination in safety. V. 24. **So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said.** V. 25. **And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.** This institution was only afterwards developed in greater detail, Num. 11, 16. 17. V. 26. **And they judged the people at all seasons,** Moses having charged and obligated them to do their work with all considerate impartiality. **The hard causes they brought unto Moses,** as the final court of appeal, **but every small matter they judged themselves.** It is not the will of God that His servants should needlessly wear themselves out in the service of the Church. It is well-pleasing to Him that the work of the Church, both in general and in the individual congregations, be distributed according to the gifts which He has given. Thus the work will result in the benefit of all. V. 27. **And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.** He returned home a convert to the God of Israel, and it was doubtless due to his influence that at least a part of his people journeyed to Canaan with Moses' brother-in-law, Num. 10, 29.

CHAPTER 19.

The Preparations for the Giving of the Law.

The Arrival at Sinai and the First Message. — V. 1. **In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.** The greater part of the time since the departure out of Egypt, on the fifteenth day of the first month, had apparently been spent at Elim and at Rephidim, and it was not until the third month that the great army came into the desert of Sinai proper. V. 2. **For they were departed from Rephidim,** chap. 17, 1, **and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount,** over against the mountain from which the entire range has received its name. V. 3. **And Moses went up unto God,** he was on his way to the summit. **And the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.** In poetic form the Lord prepares for the statement of the covenant which He here intended to make with the entire people through the person of Moses. V. 4. **Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians,** in punishing them with such terrible plagues, **and how I bare you on eagles' wings,** which are an image of the strong and affectionate care of God, for the eagle protects and fosters her young with great devotion, **and brought you unto Myself.** The mountain on which the pillar of cloud now rested was to be considered the habitation of the Lord for the time being, the place where He intended to reveal Himself in the covenant which He was about to make with the people. V. 5. **Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice in deed and keep My covenant,** gladly enter into the relation of mercy which the Lord intended to propose, **then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people,** a possession to be cherished and guarded most

carefully, more than any other nation in the world; **for all the earth is Mine**, and the sovereign Lord of the universe, who is not a national god, has the right to manifest Himself to a single nation with unusual mercy. V. 6. **And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests**, kings, in order to conquer the heathen, and priests, in order to serve the living God, **and an holy nation**, a nation consecrated, set apart, for the service of Jehovah, and therefore under obligation to lead a life of sanctification before Him. **These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.** That was the solemn, welcoming message which the Lord sent to the people whom He had chosen. In this respect the children of Israel were a type of the New Testament Church, the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the peculiar nation, 1 Pet. 2, 9; for Christ has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, Rev. 1, 6. As such we should show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. V. 7. **And Moses came and called for the elders of the people**, he summoned or invited them, **and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him.** V. 8. **And all the people** without exception **answered together**, through their elders, **and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.** They solemnly vowed allegiance and obedience, they took the obligation upon themselves. **And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.** V. 9. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud**, whose darkness would, in a measure, conceal His glory, **that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever.** The position of Moses as the receiver and the mediator of the divine revelation would thus be attested, and the revelation and the authority of the Law, as given by him, would be established. The fact that he teaches the Word of the Lord gives to every true preacher his authority to this day. **And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord.**

THE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS. — V. 10. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes,** v. 11. **and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.** The people were to be set apart, consecrated, to the Lord, the washing of the clothes being a symbol of the inner purity which should be found in every believer. They should place themselves in the proper attitude of mind to hear the terms of the covenant which the Lord would announce on the third day, when He intended to descend upon Mount Sinai in such a manner as to make His glory visible to all the children of Israel. V. 12. **And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, have a fence made all around** the base of the mountain, **saying, Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it**, the end, or foot, of the mountain. **Whosoever toucheth the mount**, the throne of God's legislation, **shall be surely put to death.** V. 13. **There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through**; being on the other side of the fence, such a person could not be apprehended without making him that attempted to seize him guilty likewise, therefore he should be killed from a distance with stones or darts; **whether it be beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount**, the long-drawn blast on the horn was the signal for the representatives of the people, the elders, to approach, chap. 24, 1. V. 14. **And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes**, they performed the ceremonial purifying as they had been ordered. V. 15. **And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day; come not at your wives**, all marital relations were to be suspended for the time being. All these preparations show that Israel was still a sinful, unclean people. And sinners may not appear before the face of the holy God in their natural sinfulness.

THE TERRIFYING EVENTS OF THE THIRD DAY. V. 16. **And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount.** There were all the signs of an unusual, supernatural thunder-shower. The darkness indicated that the holy God is unapproachable, veiling Himself from mortals even when He discloses Himself, for it is impossible for sinners to look upon His open glory. **And the voice of the trumpet (was) exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.** The blasts of the horn, terrifying in themselves, became doubly so since their source was the divine presence on the mountain, where the Lord had now come down with His holy angels to make known His holy will, Deut. 33, 2; Acts 7, 53; Gal. 3, 19. No wonder the people heard the sound only with great fear and trembling. V. 17. **And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God**, all of them were to be assembled before Him as His holy congregation; **and they stood at the nether part of the mount**, at its foot. V. 18. **And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke**, the entire mountain being enveloped in smoke, **because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, of a great smelter, and the whole mount quaked greatly.** The nearer the people came to the mountain, the more impressively was the scene enrolled before their

eyes, and the greater their terror became. V. 19. **And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder,** gained in intensity or strength, **Moses spake** from the foot of the mountain, asking God for His commands, **and God answered him by a voice,** an articulate sound which could be understood. V. 20. **And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount. And Moses went up,** in order to speak to Him alone. V. 21. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people,** testify before or upon them, **lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.** To go beyond the fence and encroach upon the territory set aside for the Lord's revelation was courting death. V. 22. **And let the priests also which come near to the Lord,** those who had till then had charge of the priestly functions among the people, **sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them,** strike them down and utterly destroy them. V. 23. **And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for Thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.** The fence had proved its value as a barrier in preventing the people from ascending the mount. V. 24. **And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou and Aaron with thee; but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest He break forth upon them,** strike them down in His anger. V. 25. **And Moses went down to the people and spake unto them.** The entire story reminds us of the fact that we believers of the New Testament are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, . . . but unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, . . . and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. 12, 18—24.

CHAPTER 20.

The Giving of the Ten Commandments and Other Ordinances.

The Decalog. — V. 1. **And God spake all these words, saying,** v. 2. **I am the Lord, thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.** That was the Lord's solemn introduction to the legislation on Mount Sinai, a reminder of the wonderful deliverance which He had wrought when He led forth His people out of the land of Egypt, where they had virtually been slaves. Note that the Decalog, as here given, was intended for the children of Israel and applied its principles to the circumstances under which they lived, with a form of government every detail of which was fixed by the Lord. V. 3. **Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,** no strange, false gods, no idols, over against Me, setting them up as rivals for the glory and power which belong to Me alone. Not that such figments of man's imagination, such works of their hands, were in truth gods in any sense of the word, but that the very thinking and fashioning of idols is forbidden by the Lord. He is supreme, He is the only God, and His will should govern all men in all situations of life; for the other nine commandments are but explanations and applications of the first. V. 4. **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,** a carved or sculptured idol, **or any likeness of anything,** any representation that is intended for religious worship, **that is in heaven above,** birds or stars (heavenly bodies) of any kind, **or that is in the earth beneath,** men or beasts, **or that is in the water under the earth,** and marine animals; v. 5. **thou shalt not bow down thyself to them,** in the act of adoration, **nor serve them,** actually giving them the worship, the honor which pertains to God alone, for that is the point of the entire prohibition, that pictures and images should not be made for purposes of worship. **For I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me,** not with the certainty of absolute fatality, but as a just punishment of those children that follow their parents and ancestors in their evil ways; v. 6. **and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.** The Lord's holiness and righteousness demands that He visit the sinners with His punitive justice, but He takes far greater pleasure in giving proofs of His mercy and kindness: He would rather reward than punish. V. 7. **Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain,** without purpose and object, in a frivolous manner; **for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain,** an emphatic warning that the punishment of God will surely strike every one who lightly and blasphemously utters the Lord's name, whether this be in thoughtless foolishness or in deliberate perjury. V. 8. **Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.** This commandment presupposes a knowledge of the Sabbath, but not of its formal celebration. All those that urge the keeping of the Sabbath according to the Jewish pattern with the argument that this day and this form were included in the will of God as written into the hearts of men at the beginning,

overlook or ignore the facts of history as found in the Book of Exodus. The deliberate setting aside of this special day of the week and the form of observance of this day as outlined to the Jews was intended for them only. V. 9. **Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work**, perform everything connected with trade, business, or profession; v. 10. **but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work**, perform the labor of your ordinary occupations, **thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates**, the enumeration purposely being made inclusive, in order to emphasize the commandment. V. 11. **For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it**, set it apart to the Jews for His worship. The commandment was later fixed even more definitely by the mention of specific forms of labor which were not permitted among the children of Israel, Ps. 104, 23; Num. 4, 47; Neh. 3, 15; Jer. 17, 21; Amos 8, 5; Num. 15, 32 ff. Note that the simple understanding of the text demands the assumption that the Lord created the world in six ordinary days.

THE COMMANDMENTS CONCERNING THE LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOR. — V. 12. **Honor thy father and thy mother**, they are to be given the reverence due to them as the representatives of God, with heart, mouth, and hand, in thought, word, and deed. In the home, in the family, is the foundation of all social life, all governments really being dependent upon the relation of parents and children, the existence and the welfare of the nations depending upon the moral stability given them by the home in its proper form, as the promise indicates; **that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.** It is the first commandment with promise, as St. Paul writes Eph. 6, 2. 3, where he changes the text to apply to all men, and not only to the Jewish nation. V. 13. **Thou shalt not kill**, the duty of preserving the life which God has given to man being enjoined here in all its branches and manifestations. V. 14. **Thou shalt not commit adultery**, the word here used including not only the unfaithfulness of men and women within holy marriage, but every form of impurity directed against the holiness of God's institution of wedlock. Not only is every thought, word, and deed that is sanctioned and commanded within the confines of marriage forbidden outside of these bounds, but also every form of obscenity and every kind of familiarity which is connected with the sexual development of man. V. 15. **Thou shalt not steal**, the Lord here protecting the property of one's neighbor, as the condition of the dignity and peacefulness of life, not only against robbery and theft, but also against unfaithfulness, neglect, and waste. V. 16. **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor**, the object being to protect truth, not only in all public, civil relations, but also in the home, the malice of evil tongues being well known. V. 17. **Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.** Here the thoughts of the entire second table are once more summarized with reference to the source of sin; for it is out of the heart that the evil thoughts proceed which are afterward realized in various actual sins, Matt. 15, 19. So the admirable and fitting order of the commandments, as Luther calls it, is brought to an end and the circle of injunctions completed; for it is only by the sanctification of the heart according to the Tenth Commandment that the true worship of God according to the First Commandment can be secured. It should be noted here that both the division of the Decalog as such and the distinction between the Ninth and the Tenth Commandment are matters of no material consequence.[3])

THE TERROR OF THE PEOPLE. — V. 18. **And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking.** The impression was made on all the senses, but that of sight was chiefly involved. The manifestation of God's majesty was so powerful that it effected not only a wholesome awe of the great Jehovah, but an extreme terror as well. **And when the people saw it, they removed, they shrank back from the vicinity of the mountain, and stood afar off.** V. 19. **And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.** The consciousness of their own sinfulness, their fleshly fear and terror, caused them to promise a ready obedience to all the words of Moses. V. 20. **And Moses said unto the people, Fear not; for God is come to prove you**, His intention was to test the disposition of their hearts, to try them out with this terrifying aspect, **that His fear may be before your faces that ye sin not.** By the Law is the knowledge of sin, and God wanted to manifest His glory in order to work in their hearts the proper, holy reverence which would keep them from faithlessness and disobedience. V. 21. **And the people stood afar off**, remained standing at a distance, **and Moses, as the mediator of the people, drew near unto the thick darkness where God was**, in order to receive the further commands of the Lord.

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3) For a possible distinction between the Ninth and the Tenth Commandment, see *Lehre und Wehre*, July, 1915.

The Precept Concerning the Altar. — V. 22. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.** This fact proved the superiority, the authority of the Lord, His right to express His demands as He was now preparing to do. No false God would have had this power, and the incident was bound to establish Jehovah as the true God in the sight of Israel. V. 23. **Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.** The children of Israel were not to make and place on a level with Jehovah, for purposes of worship, idols of any kind, which they would then regard as their gods. The making and worshiping of such images, every form of idolatry, was absolutely prohibited. V. 24. **An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen.** Such offerings were a type and figure of the heart of man, as it arose in true worship to the throne of God, for which reason also plain ground, the soil as the Lord created it, was the material which He preferred, that being found practically everywhere where the children of Israel would assemble for worship. **In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.** God is confined neither to Temple nor to Tabernacle, but is able to reveal His glorious majesty at any place which He may choose. And wherever this takes place, those who are fortunate enough to be witnesses of such a revelation will become partakers of God's blessings. It is this fact which is of such great value to us believers of the New Testament, since we have the assurance that the presence of the Lord in the Word and in the Sacraments guarantees to us His blessings. V. 25. **And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, if the children of Israel should prefer such an altar, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it,** literally: for thy sharpness thou swingest above it, and thou desecratest it. Ornamentation of the altar of the Lord under the circumstances in which the Israelites found themselves would have redounded to their own glory, and not to that of the Lord. V. 26. **Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon,** as would happen with the loose-fitting clothes then worn. Since the consciousness of sin came to man with the feeling of shame, therefore the revealing of nakedness is equivalent to a shameless exhibition of sin, and thus not permissible in the worship of Jehovah.

CHAPTER 21.

Ordinances Concerning Slaves and Various Forms of Violent Deaths.

Precepts Regulating the Master's Relation to Slaves. — V. 1. **Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them.** These were special ordinances concerning the political commonwealth of the Jews. In the New Testament God's revelation is no longer confined to one single people, and we no longer have any state under the direct government of God. And yet, also these ordinances were recorded for our learning, especially for the purpose of teaching us various applications of the law of love. V. 2. **If thou buy an Hebrew servant, as a slave, six years he shall serve in this capacity; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing,** the idea being that he has earned his freedom by his six years' service. V. 3. **If he came in by himself,** literally, with his body, that is, unmarried, **he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.** Cp. chap. 22, 3; Lev. 25, 39; Deut. 15, 12—15. V. 4. **If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters,** the woman, of course, being a slave also, **the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.** The man could have his freedom, if he chose, but the woman would stlil remain the master's property, and her children as well. V. 5. **And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free,** the slave preferring a continuation of his slavery in the company of his family to freedom without his loved ones, v. 6. **then his master shall bring him unto the judges,** before the proper officers; **he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door-post of his house; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever,** the opening in the ear marking the slave as such. V. 7. **And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant,** her position being that of housekeeper and probable concubine, **she shall not go out as the men-servants do,** that is, not be released in the seventh year, the purpose being that she meanwhile become the wife or the concubine either of the master or of his son. V. 8. **If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself,** that is, who had purchased her with the expectation of making her his wife or concubine, then **shall he let her be redeemed by some other man** who might desire her for his wife. **To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her,** he has broken faith with her, for she came to him, although her father sold her for reasons

of poverty, Lev. 25, 39, with the understanding that she was to occupy the position of wife or concubine. Hebrew girls were not to be sold into unconditional slavery to members of other nations. V. 9. **And if he have betrothed her unto his son,** if he have purchased the girl with the intention of making her his son's wife or concubine, **he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters,** according to the rights of a daughter. That was the second possibility. V. 10. **If he take him another wife,** so that he have two or more wives or concubines, **her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage,** the special duty which marriage implies, **shall he not diminish.** She was on no account to be neglected also in case of this third possibility; the father was to use his power and authority in upholding the rights of the girl. V. 11. **And if he do not these three unto her,** that is, if, in the three given instances, he does not do the right thing by her, **then shall she go out free without money.** The woman would have her freedom, and her father would have the advantage of the purchase-money. Thus was the Hebrew male or female servant protected, for the Israelites were not to forget that the lowly among their people were likewise members of God's chosen nation. The principle applies to Christian masters also, inasmuch as they will treat even the least among the believers as brethren and sisters in Christ.

CONCERNING MURDER AND BODILY INJURIES. V. 12. **He that smiteth a man,** strikes him down with deliberate intention, **so that he die, shall be surely put to death.** The reference seems to be to a murder committed in the heat of anger or in a condition of intoxication. V. 13. **And if a man lie not in wait,** does not seek a man's life with deliberate intent, **but God deliver him into his hand,** God permits it to happen in that manner that a man kills another by accident, **then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.** The Lord later designated certain cities as cities of refuge, Num. 35, 11; Deut. 19, 1—10. V. 14. **But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile,** if he has deliberately planned the crime and carried it out in cold blood, **thou shalt take him from Mine altar that he may die;** in that case it would not even avail the murderer to seek the refuge of the sanctuary. Because he has broken down the sacred wall which protected his neighbor, therefore it would also, in his case, not be a violation of the altar of God to tear him away from its protection and put him to death. V. 15. **And he that smiteth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.** So highly was the honor of parents esteemed in the sight of God that the mere act of striking either of them was equivalent to manslaughter, to cold-blooded murder, and was punished accordingly. V. 16. **And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.** Man-stealing, as a violent abuse of one's neighbor's person, of his dignity as a human being, was also placed on a plane with murder. V. 17. **And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.** Since the cursing and reviling of parents flows from the same wicked disposition of mind as striking them, v. 15, the same punishment is decreed by God. V. 18. **And if men strive together,** in a quarrel which culminates in physical violence, **and one smite another with a stone or with his fist,** with a clod, **and he die not, but keepeth his bed,** is confined to his bed in consequence of the blow; v. 19. **if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit,** be released from the probable charge of manslaughter; **only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed;** he shall make good the loss occasioned by the enforced idleness and pay the doctor bills and the medicine. V. 20. **And if a man smite his servant or his maid,** his male or his female slave, **with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished,** be required to give satisfaction. V. 21. **Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two** before dying, and it be shown in this way that it was not the master's intention to commit murder outright, **he shall not be punished; for he is his money,** the slave was the master's property, and in such a case it would not stand to reason that he had deliberately and purposely killed the slave. The law was intended to prevent ruthless exhibitions of temper and cold-blooded murders. V. 22. **If men strive, and hurt a woman with child,** the pregnant woman interposing between the quarreling men, **so that her fruit depart from her,** that a miscarriage occurs, **and yet no mischief follow,** if the woman herself is not injured and if her ability to bear children is not impaired, **he shall be surely punished,** that is, the guilty man, **according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine;** the injured parties being awarded damages according to the merits of the case. V. 23. **And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life,** v. 24. **eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,** v. 25. **burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.** That was the law of retaliation as it could be invoked by such as sought indemnity for injuries: the injured woman might demand expiation according to the degree of her hurt. That was the ordinance so far as free Israelites were concerned. V. 26. **And if a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.** No distinction is made between deliberate cruelty and an unintentional

blow, the effect alone being registered. V. 27. **And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.** The loss, not only of some member of the body, but even of a single tooth, as a result of the master's treatment, entitled the slave to his freedom. So far as Christians are concerned, they know that they should not hurt nor harm their neighbor in his body. They will not insist upon any law of retaliation, as the granting of indemnities is a function of the government, but will keep in mind the Lord's admonition to kindness and placableness.

Ordinances for the Protection of Life and Property. — V. 28. **If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten,** be considered unclean; **but the owner of the ox shall be quit,** shall be considered and declared innocent of any wrongdoing. V. 29. **But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in,** if the owner was fully aware that the ox was in the habit of attacking people, that he was of a mean disposition, and yet did not confine him, **but that he hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death,** because he, by his neglect in watching the vicious animal, became the cause of the deaths. There was a possibility, however, of a man's saving his life in such a case. V. 30. **If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him,** as a punishment for his criminal carelessness. V. 31. **Whether he have gored a son or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him.** The law was justly strict and made no distinction between men and women; it was a case of paying the price of ransom or the penalty of death. V. 32. **If the ox shall push a man-servant or a maid-servant,** the injury resulting in death, **he,** the owner of the vicious brute, **shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver,** probably the usual market price of a slave, **and the ox shall be stoned.** Thus we also, in passing judgment upon any trespass, distinguish between sins of weakness and sins of malice, between transgressions by neglect, by mistake, and by criminal intent, being very careful not to accuse any one unjustly. V. 33. **And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein,** the result being that his neighbor is harmed in his possessions, v. 34. **the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them,** restore their full value in money; **and the dead beast shall be his,** he may dispose of the carcass as he sees fit. V. 35. **And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die, then they shall sell the live ox, the one that did the damage, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide,** both parties, in this case, bearing the loss equally, since it could rarely be determined which animal was the aggressor. V. 36. **Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in, he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.** In this case the owner of the mean animal would be guilty of criminal neglect, of punishable carelessness, and would therefore have to restore to his neighbor the full value of the animal which was dead through the viciousness of his ox, only the carcass being his. To this day the right understanding of the Seventh Commandment demands that full restoration be made to one's neighbor, not only in case of theft, but whenever he has suffered damage, even through the agency of a brute beast.

CHAPTER 22.

Ordinances Concerning Property and General Social Relations.

Regarding Property. — V. 1. **If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen,** five head of cattle, **for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.** The Lord wanted complete restoration to be made, the indemnity being in proportion to the transgression. V. 2. **If a thief be found breaking up,** breaking through a wall, breaking into a house, Matt. 6, 20, **and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him,** his death cannot demand the vengeance which a murder would; for the owner of the house would have to guard against every contingency, including murder. V. 3. **If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him,** to kill a thief in broad daylight was to be considered murder. **For he,** the thief apprehended in the day, **should make full restitution,** most certainly pay back all that he stole. **If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft,** for the value of the goods stolen by him. V. 4. **If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox or ass or sheep, he shall restore double,** the four- and fivefold restitution being required only in case the stolen animals had already been slaughtered or sold. Theft being a severe offense against one's neighbor, severe measures were taken at once to keep men from this transgression. V. 5. **If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast,** if a person injures his neighbor's

property by letting his cattle run loose, and shall feed in another man's field, of the best of his own field and of the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution; for carelessness of this kind is inexcusable, being almost equivalent to wilful damage. V. 6. If fire break out, said of any small fire which gets beyond the control of him that started it, and catch in thorns, in the thorn-hedge at the edge of the field, which it was intended to destroy, so that the stacks of corn, sheaves of grain stacked after harvest, or the standing corn or the field, no matter what it contains, be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution for his act of foolish carelessness. V. 7. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, entrusts any valuables to him for safe-keeping, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. V. 8. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to the proper officials of the government, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. The object of the investigation was to give the lord of the house an opportunity to clear himself of suspicion, as though he had been guilty of appropriating his neighbor's property, which he was to guard as he did his own. V. 9. For all manner of trespass, in the case of any accusation alleging a crime, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges, before the officials having the jurisdiction of the case; and whom the judges shall condemn, declare to be in the wrong, he shall pay double unto his neighbor. This is the general rule for all cases of contested property. V. 10. If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it die or be hurt or driven away, no man seeing it, the fact that no witnesses were near making the matter very complicated, v. 11. then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, the one suspected being given an opportunity to declare his innocence under oath, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he, the man to whom the animals had been entrusted, shall not make it good. V. 12. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. In the case of animals, unlike that of money and valuables, the guardian of the property was also expected to act as watchman, his failure in this respect costing him dearly. V. 13. If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn, for the fact that he produced the torn animal proved that he had watched and even driven off the attacking predatory beast. V. 14. And if a man borrow aught of his neighbor, some work animal, which he then uses, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good; for in this case neglect might be assumed. V. 15. But if the owner thereof be with it, be present when some accident befalls his animal, he, the borrower, shall not make it good; if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire, he paid for the use of the animal and cannot be held responsible for the accident. Fairness and justice was to govern all the relations of the children of Israel toward one another.

REGARDING VARIOUS SOCIAL RELATIONS. — V. 16. And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, thus seducing her and robbing her of her honor and virginity, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. The crime could be expiated at least in a measure by his marrying the girl and by giving dowry money to her father. V. 17. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay, weigh out, money according to the dowry of virgins. This procedure, in a way, reinstated the girl as a virgin, and she was afterwards not barred from marrying. The transgressor thus made good his crime as far as possible and showed his repentance. In the case of a betrothed virgin the punishment inflicted upon the seducer was death, Deut. 22, 23. 24. V. 18. Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live; every one, man or woman, actually guilty of witchcraft, was to be put to death. The sorceress is merely named because women were more addicted to this practise than men. V. 19. Whosoever lieth with a beast, in sexual intercourse, shall surely be put to death. Cp. Lev. 18, 23; 20, 15; Deut. 27, 21. This vice was placed on the same level with pederasty or sodomy, Lev. 20, 13. V. 20. He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed. Since the government of the children of Israel was a theocracy, under the direct rule of Jehovah, the idolater forfeited his life. At the present time it would be wrong for a government to punish sorcery, idolatry, heresy, with death or in any form whatsoever, unless social damage has been done; for the state is concerned with outward matters only. But so far as the Christian congregations are concerned, they cannot tolerate offenders of this kind in their midst, for the trespasses named are deadly sins, which absolutely drive out faith. V. 21. Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, in no manner make life miserable for him, either by open persecution or by constant nagging; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt, and the memory of those years of oppression was intended to foster in their hearts true kindness. The word "stranger" apparently applies to non-Canaanitish strangers only; for the Canaanites were to be extirpated.

V. 22. **Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.** To humble widows and orphans by acts of unkindness is to challenge the Lord, who is the special Protector of the desolate. V. 23. **If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry;** v. 24. **and My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless.** In the wars which the Lord would bring upon them as an act of retaliation and revenge, their own loved ones, by their death, would be left as helpless as those whom the Israelites oppressed and humbled in the first place. V. 25. **If thou lend money to any of My people that is poor by thee,** to any members of the Jewish nation that were in such need as to be compelled to borrow for the necessaries of life, **thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury,** take interest in such a case. V. 26. **If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge,** take his garment as security, **thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down;** v. 27. **for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin, it serves to cover and protect his body against the inclemencies of the weather; wherein shall he sleep?** The upper garment of the Oriental served him as a cover in which he wrapped himself at night. **And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious,** His divine favor rests upon such as are in need. We Christians also know that it pleases the Lord if we have compassion upon the widow and the fatherless, and that any oppression of the poor and needy will bring upon us His punishment. V. 28. **Thou shalt not revile the gods,** that is, Elohim, the one true God, **they shall not blaspheme, nor curse the ruler of thy people,** who is a representative of the Lord on earth. V. 29. **Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors,** literally, "Of thy fulness or plenty and of thy drop [of oil and wine] thou shalt not delay"; for the Lord wanted the first-fruits of the field, of the vineyard, and of the olive-orchard. **The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me.** Cp. chap. 13, 2. 12. V. 30. **Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it Me as a sacrifice.** V. 31. **And ye shall be holy men unto Me,** set apart as a peculiar nation; **neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.** As a people that was consecrated to the Lord in the first-born they should abstain from the eating of unclean meat, to which that belonged which had been torn by beasts of prey. Christians will also abstain from all practises which will defile the heart and the mind and be glad to offer to the Lord of their income from all sources.

CHAPTER 23.

Directions Concerning Worship and the Continuation of the Journey.

Further Ordinances Regarding Social Relations. — V. 1. **Thou shalt not raise a false report,** undertake to testify of a promise or agreement which was not heard with your own ears. **Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness,** to charge your neighbor with any form of wickedness, to involve him in quarrels before court. Testimony should never be given in favor of some criminal act. V. 2. **Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment.** The thought of the first half of the sentence is emphasized in the second part; for to yield to the hasty judgment of the multitude merely because of the great numbers that hold an opinion, if this means deviating from the way of truth and of justice, is sharply condemned by the Lord. A witness in any case should speak the full truth to the best of his knowledge. V. 3. **Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.** To pretend to be moved by sympathy for the poor in favoring them in each and every suit is an affectation; God wanted His people to stand on the side of justice, regardless of consequences. V. 4. **If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again;** for difficulties and differences with any person should not set aside the love for him as a neighbor, and for this reason the command is made emphatic. V. 5. **If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden,** borne down to the ground by the greatness of the load upon him, **and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him,** literally: "Wouldest thou hold back from helping?" Surely no man's feeling of revenge would reach the point of permitting a dumb beast to suffer. There is only one thing to do in such an extremity: relieve the beast of its load, help him to arise, assist his master in saving the burden. That such conduct requires self-denial is implied, but the Lord wants such self-denial to be practised. V. 6. **Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor,** of the poor dependent upon thee, **in his cause.** This ordinance supplements v. 3, bidding the mighty beware of violating their position and the rights of those that are defenseless before them, since the Lord is their

Protector. V. 7. **Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and the righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked.** This is said to the selfish, unrighteous judge, whose perversion of justice may, under circumstances, bring death to an innocent, righteous man. The form of the threat is particularly effective in setting forth the certain condemnation of the wicked judge. V. 8. **And thou shalt take no gift,** no judge should ever accept a bribe, even in the form of an innocent-looking present; **for the gift blindeth the wise,** acts as a hood before the eyes of him who otherwise may see well in any case brought to his attention, **and perverteth the words of the righteous,** making right wrong and causing the judge to render false decisions. V. 9. **Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger,** an injunction which in this connection refers chiefly to court cases; **for ye know the heart of a stranger,** just how he feels in the midst of humiliation and oppression, **seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.** So much the Christians will also heed, especially such as are in positions of authority, where they must judge, render decisions, set forth the truth, that they be strictly impartial, not permitting themselves to be influenced by the social status of any persons with whom they have dealings, but frankly reproving the evil and acknowledging the good.

THE HOLY PERIODS AND FEASTS. — V. 10. **And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof,** whatever it yields under careful cultivation; v. 11. **but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still,** let it remain unused, make no attempt to cultivate it, **that the poor of thy people may eat,** namely, that produced by the land without cultivation, the so-called volunteer grain; **and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat.** This fallowing of the land would give it an opportunity to recuperate. **In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and with thy oliveyard.** There also the fruits were not to be gathered, but left for the poor and needy, for the beasts of the field, and for the fowls of the air. This was the so-called Sabbath of Years, analogous to the Sabbath of the Week. V. 12. **Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest,** mainly by desisting from work, **that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed.** So the slaves and the strangers, as well as the domestic animals, were to be given a breathing-spell once a week, the Sabbath thus serving not only religious, but also humanitarian ends. V. 13. **And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect,** be on your guard, watch most carefully; **and make no mention of the name of other gods,** the very reference to them being prohibited, **neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.** Jehovah was to be adored exclusively in the midst of Israel. V. 14. **Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year.** This is the enumeration of the great Jewish festivals, as it is repeatedly found in the ordinances given through Moses in the wilderness. V. 15. **Thou shalt keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread,** in connection with the Passover; **(thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee,** chap. 12, **in the time appointed of the month Abib,** from the fourteenth to the twenty-first; **for in it thou camest out from Egypt,** it was the festival in commemoration of the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; **and none shall appear before Me empty,** that is, with empty hands, every one being expected to bring sacrificial gifts to the Lord;) v. 16. **and the Feast of Harvest,** afterwards known as the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, **the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field,** the festival of the grain harvest; **and the Feast of Ingathering,** afterwards known as the Feast of Tabernacles, **which is in the end of the year,** in the fall of the year, in October, **when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field,** not only the grain, but also the fruits, the three great products being usually mentioned as corn, wine, and oil. V. 17. **Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.** So it was specifically ordered that on the above-mentioned feasts the men of the congregation were obliged to appear before the Lord, a fact which excludes neither women, 1 Sam. 1, 3, nor children, Luke 2, 41 ff. V. 18. **Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice,** that of the Passover, which, in a most particular sense, belonged to the Lord, **with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of My sacrifice** (or feast) **remain until the morning.** This is a reference to the institution of the Passover and of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for the Lord had decreed that leaven and leavened bread should not be found in the houses of the Israelites when this great sacrifice was made, and also that no part of the Passover lamb was to remain till the morning. V. 19. **The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord, thy God.** This refers to the festivals in general, for not only were the firstlings of the barley sheaves offered at Passover and two pentecostal loaves during the Feast of Weeks, but the people were expected in general to bring gifts of first-fruits to the Lord. **Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk,** this practise being prohibited as unnatural and tending to make the feasting the central feature, especially in connection with the great festivals. The Old Testament Sabbath and festivals with their ordinances are no longer binding upon the Christians of the New Testament; yet God expects also us to thank and to praise, to serve and obey Him in true faith and love.

Concerning the Continuation of the Journey. — V. 20. **Behold, I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.** This special guiding and protecting Angel was the Son of God Himself, for in Him Jehovah was revealed; in Him, as the Angel of the face of God, the innermost essence of God was manifested. Under His almighty guidance their journey would prosper. V. 21. **Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not, do not embitter Him; for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him.** The salvation of the children of Israel would depend upon their obedience, implicit, cheerful obedience. V. 22. **But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak,** as the Lord's word and His word would be identical, **then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies and an adversary unto thine adversaries;** all those that bore or showed ill will to the children of Israel the Lord would requite in kind. V. 23. **For Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off,** destroy, annihilate, extirpate them. V. 24. **Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works,** in no manner become guilty of false worship, of idolatry; **but thou shalt utterly overthrow them,** the destruction of the heathen tribes of Canaan being expressly commanded here, **and quite break down their images,** break in pieces, smash the carved pillars used for idolatrous purposes. V. 25. **And ye shall serve the Lord, your God, and He shall bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.** Bread and water are symbols of welfare, and well-being and health were to be the reward of faithfulness. V. 26. **There shall nothing cast their young nor be barren in thy land;** the population of men as well as of domestic animals was not to be diminished by epidemics of miscarriages and by barrenness. **The number of thy days I will fulfil;** for a long life, under the blessing of God, is a reward of His goodness and mercy. V. 27. **I will send My fear before thee, causing all the heathen to be filled with apprehension and dread, and I will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs upon thee,** in flight, without having so much as begun a battle. V. 28. **And I will send hornets before thee,** a figurative expression to denote the utmost terror, caused probably by some severe epidemic which the Lord sent to frighten the Canaanites, **which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee.** V. 29. **I will not drive them out from before thee in one year,** as the Lord could very easily have done, **lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee,** their numbers as yet not being great enough to occupy the entire country. Cp. Deut. 7, 22; Lev. 26, 22; Josh. 13, 1—7. V. 30. **By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land;** while the heathen nations as such would be destroyed, individuals would still be found throughout the country until such a time as the growing number of the Israelites would crowd them out. V. 31. **And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea,** on the south, **even unto the sea of the Philistines,** the Mediterranean, on the west, **and from the desert of Arabia,** on the southeast, **unto the river,** the Euphrates, on the north, these being the ideal boundaries of the Promised Land; **for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them out before thee.** V. 32. **Thou shalt make no covenant with them,** be inveigled into forming an alliance with them, **nor with their gods,** the idols which they had made for themselves. V. 33. **They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me;** if they would remain in the land, their presence and their idolatrous customs would be a continual temptation to Israel, as the Lord well knew; **for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.** Even so, the intercourse of Christians with the children of this world all too often proves a snare to them, and they are lured into the idolatrous customs of the unbelievers. It is to our greatest advantage not to provoke the Lord at any time, lest He take His gracious presence from us. It is only by staying with Him that we are safe forever.

CHAPTER 24.

The Formal Covenant.

Moses Summoned by God. — V. 1. **And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.** The emphatic position of the word "Moses" in the Hebrew text shows that this command was given to Moses directly, not addressed to the people, as the Ten Commandments had been. Nadab and Abihu were sons of Aaron, and the seventy elders represented the people. In drawing near to the Lord these men were commanded to bow down, to worship, but only from a distance, Moses alone, as the prophet of Jehovah, being permitted to go to the top of the mountain. V. 2. **And**

Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him. Both Aaron and his sons, representing the priests, and the seventy elders, the government representatives of the popular assembly, were excluded from the intimate privileges of the prophet of the Lord. V. 3. **And Moses,** who had been in the darkness at the foot of the mountain, at some distance from the people, **came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments,** all the ordinances recorded in the preceding chapters; **and all the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.** Under the influence of the awe-inspiring manifestation of Jehovah which they had witnessed they voiced their unanimous consent, their unconditional agreement. V. 4. **And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord,** he recorded all the laws and ordinances which had been given till now, that none might be overlooked or forgotten, **and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.** The altar indicated the presence of Jehovah, while the twelve pillars symbolized the twelve tribes of Israel, representing their presence. V. 5. **And he sent young men of the children of Israel,** chiefly because they possessed the necessary strength and agility to perform the work quickly, **which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord,** true offerings of salvation, which symbolized the gracious regard of the Lord for the people of His choice, the union effected by His mercy. V. 6. **And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins,** saving it for a ceremony shortly to be performed; **and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar,** he poured it out before the Lord with one swift movement. V. 7. **And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people,** as containing the terms of the covenant on God's side; it was called out with a loud voice, so all could hear. **And they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient;** having had another opportunity to hear the ordinances, they willingly consented to all the terms. V. 8. **And Moses took the blood,** which had been kept in the basins, **and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.** The significance of this solemn ceremony was that the people, through the blood of the sacrifice as it was sprinkled upon them, were received into the full fellowship with God, just as the blood poured out at the altar signified the complete surrender of the people to God. But the surrender of the people in general, as they voiced their consent to the Lord's ordinances, preceded their obedience in particular, the order which is observed to this day. We Christians are brought into true fellowship with God, not by the sacrificial blood of mere animals, but through the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

THE ELDERS APPEAR BEFORE GOD; MOSES REMAINS. — V. 9. **Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,** representing the prophetic, the priestly, and the political element of the children of Israel, according to God's command, v. 1; v. 10. **and they saw the God of Israel,** who revealed Himself to them in some form which gave them an idea of His divine essence; **and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone,** a brilliant formation of sapphire blue, **and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.** It was a vision of the covenant God of Israel, of Him who had first revealed Himself to the patriarchs, in all the beauty of His grace and faithfulness. Thus the fellowship, the alliance, of the children of Israel with the majestic God was perfected. V. 11. **And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand,** the Lord did not harm them, although they, sinful people as they were, stood in the presence of God's holiness and justice; **also they saw God, and did eat and drink,** they held a feast in the presence of the vision, thus testifying to the complete and strong fellowship that obtained between them and the Lord of the covenant. It was a foretaste of the precious and wonderful blessings with which the Lord intended to satisfy the souls of His people forever. V. 12. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount and be there.** Moses is here summoned to a private interview and to a long stay on the mountain. **And I will give thee tables of stone, and a Law, and commandments which I have written,** a codex prepared by the hand of God Himself, **that thou mayest teach them.** V. 13. **And Moses rose up and his minister,** his servant, **Joshua,** chap. 17, 9; 32, 17; 33, 11; **and Moses went up into the mount of God,** to the summit of Sinai. V. 14. **And he said unto the elders,** who were still at the side, or at the foot of the mountain where the glory of the Lord had been revealed to them, **Tarry ye here for us until we come again unto you; and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man have any matters to do,** any difficult matter which requires adjustment, **let him come unto them;** he appointed them as chief magistrates to act during his absence. V. 15. **And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount,** blotting out all the brilliance and clearness which the elders had witnessed. V. 16. **And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days,** thus increasing the impression of awe which the people felt in consequence of all these

marvelous happenings. **And the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud,** summoning him into His very presence. V. 17. **And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.** "Into this fiery radiance Moses enters, through the fiery flame of the unapproachable justice of God, through the lightnings of the flaming sword of the cherubim, in order to receive the fiery Law." (Lange.) V. 18. **And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.** But we are reminded of the fact that our Lord, unless approached in and through Christ, is a consuming fire, Heb. 12, 29.

CHAPTER 25.

The Order to Prepare the Tabernacle and Its Appointments.

OFFERINGS OF THE ISRAELITES REQUESTED. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring Me an offering,** according to the Hebrew text, a gift which one lifts off, takes away from the rest of his property and reaches out and up to God; **of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart,** literally, "from the side of every man whom his heart impels," **ye shall take My offering;** truly a fine description of the eager willingness which should characterize all the gifts of the believers in the interest of the kingdom of God on earth. V. 3. **And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold and silver and brass,** iron not being included, probably on account of its tendency to rust, v. 4. **and blue,** a hyacinth-colored or dark-blue purple, **and purple,** that is, the purple proper, of a brilliant dark-red, **and scarlet,** or crimson purple, dyed with the color prepared from the coccus insect, **and fine linen,** a silklike, snow-white muslin, **and goats' hair,** v. 5. **and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins,** probably the skins of a marine animal found in the Red Sea, which were used both for sandal-leather and for tent-coverings, **and shittim wood,** that of the Arabian acacia, which is very light and yet very strong and durable, v. 6. **oil for the light,** as it was required to burn in the great candelabrum, **spices,** sweet-smelling ingredients, **for anointing oil and for sweet incense,** the odor of which was pleasant, v. 7. **onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod,** in rows or clusters on one of the ornamental garments of the high priest, **and in the breastplate,** chap. 28, 6 ff. V. 8. **And let them make Me a sanctuary,** a tabernacle, or building, set apart or consecrated for holy uses, **that I may dwell among them.** V. 9. **According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, the tent of God's dwelling, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.** The Lord laid before Moses sketches, plans, or models, which gave him an adequate and correct idea of the great tent with all its equipment, a type, or figure, of heavenly things, Acts 7, 44; Heb. 8, 5, as well as of the blessings of the New Testament, Heb. 9.

THE ARK OF THE TABERNACLE. — V. 10. **And they shall make an ark of shittim wood,** a chest made of acacia wood; **two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof** (a cubit being between 18 and 21 inches), **and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.** V. 11. **And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about,** evidently an ornamental molding at the top. V. 12. **And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof,** on the four ornamental feet on which the chest stood; **and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it,** firmly fastened, in order to bear a strain. V. 13. **And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood,** long poles of acacia wood, **and overlay them with gold.** V. 14. **And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them,** lifted up and carried along readily. V. 15. **The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it,** for the bearers of the ark were not to touch the chest itself, Num. 4, 15. V. 16. **And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee,** the tables of stone on which God intended to write the Ten Commandments, as the words through which He would permanently testify to His people. V. 17. **And thou shalt make a mercy-seat,** a lid, or covering, **of the ark, of pure gold; two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.** This mercy-seat, or lid of expiation, received its name from the fact that the guilt of the people, by virtue of the blood sprinkled against it on the great Day of Atonement, was expiated, their sin was covered. V. 18. **And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them,** enchased and rounded with a hammer, the figures thus being not massive, but hollow, **in the two ends of the mercy-seat.** V. 19. **And make one cherub on the one end and the other cherub on the other**

end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof, fastened to the solid gold of the ark's lid in such a manner as to form a structural unit. V. 20. **And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings,** their wings overshadowing the entire lid, **and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.** The figures, probably formed like those of men, with the wings added, and standing upright on the cover, were to face each other with outstretched wings, but with their eyes directed to the lid on which they stood. V. 21. **And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony,** the two tables of stone with their engraving, **that I shall give thee.** V. 22. **And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of the Testimony, of all things which I give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.** According to this statement the mercy-seat became the throne of God in the midst of His people, the footstool of the Most High, the place where He not only bore witness to His people, but where He also dispensed His mercy, by virtue of the greater expiation by blood which was foreshadowed in the rites connected with the lid of expiation. For the covering of the ark was a type of Christ, who is the true Mercy-seat, Rom. 3, 25; Heb. 4, 16. Through His own blood Christ has wrought a perfect expiation and redemption for us, and He now stands as our Mediator between God, whose throne is above the cherubim, and sinful men. It is our privilege, by faith in Him, to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4, 16.

THE TABLE FOR THE SHOWBREAD. — V. 23. **Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood; two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof,** that being the size of the plate, **and a cubit and a half the height thereof.** V. 24. **And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about,** heavy cross-pieces, or molding, connecting the legs of the table. V. 25. **And thou shalt make unto it a border of an handbreadth round about,** a heavy molding at the edge of the plate, **and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about,** a special rim which stood up above the plate of the table, to prevent the objects on the table from rolling or sliding off. V. 26. **And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold,** doubtless cast like those of the ark, **and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof.** V. 27. **Over against the border,** next to the heavy molding at the top, **shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table,** containers for the poles which were used in moving the table. V. 28. **And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood,** the same material from which those of the ark were made, **and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them.** V. 29. **And thou shalt make the dishes thereof,** the large plates for the showbread, **and spoons thereof,** the small vessels for the incense, Num. 7, 14, **and covers thereof, and bowls thereof,** pitchers and goblets for the drink-offering, **to cover withal,** that is, formed so as to make pouring possible; **of pure gold shalt thou make them.** V. 30. **And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before Me alway,** the bread of the face of the Lord, twelve cakes made of fine flour, set forth in two heaps of six each. These vessels and sacrifices were to remind Israel of the fruits of good works which all believers were to work always. The covenant people of the New Testament will also offer the sacrifices of heart, lips, and hands as a sweet savor unto the Lord.

THE CANDLESTICK AND THE HOLY VESSELS. — V. 31. **And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work shall the candlestick be made,** of chased work, rounded with the hammer, apparently not solid, but hollow inside; **his shaft,** the base with its feet, **and his branches,** the heavy middle trunk of the candlestick, **his bowls,** the calyx-shaped burners, **his knops,** the knobs, or apple-like ornaments beneath the calyces; **and his flowers,** the blossom-shaped ornaments on the branches, **shall be of the same,** of pure gold. V. 32. **And six branches shall come out of the sides of it, three branches of the candlestick out of the one side and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side,** the hollow central shaft thus being the trunk, and the three branches on either side, standing in a horizontal line, lifting their burners at even distances, forming a luminous tree. V. 33. **Three bowls made like unto almonds,** like the blossoms of the almond-tree, **with a knop and a flower in one branch,** in each individual branch; **and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower; so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick.** V. 34. **And in the candlestick,** in the central shaft, **shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers,** one apparently at each whorl of branches, and one at the top. V. 35. **And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same,** the branches thus extending out from the middle shaft immediately above each set of knobs, **according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick.** V. 36. **Their knops and their branches shall be**

of the same, shall be a continuation of the main shaft, form a unit with the trunk, not merely be attached on the outside; all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. V. 37. **And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, set them in place in the bowls, that they may give light over against it,** that is, toward the east and north from the Most Holy Place, especially in the neighborhood of the altar of incense and the table of the showbread. V. 38. **And the tongs thereof,** the snuffers, **and the snuff-dishes thereof,** the shears, or pincers, for trimming the wicks, or the small dishes for holding the trimmings, **shall be of pure gold.** V. 39. **Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it,** the artisan entrusted with the work, **with all these vessels.** It was a costly and heavy candlestick, for a talent is about 118 pounds Troy. V. 40. **And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount.** Moses had seen the picture, or model, and he was to have an exact copy made. The golden candlestick, which is here described in such detail, was to remind Israel of the high calling which the believers have in this world. And in the same way the Christians are never to lose sight of the fact that the Lord expects them to be the light of the world, that they should let their light shine before men in word and work.

CHAPTER 26.

A Detailed Description of the Tabernacle.

The Covering of the Tent. — V. 1. **Moreover, thou shalt make the Tabernacle with ten curtains,** long pieces, or strips, corresponding to the canvas of modern tents, **of fine twined linen,** the silky byssus cloth, **and blue, and purple, and scarlet,** chap. 25, 4; **with cherubim of cunning work shalt thou make them.** The work was to be that of an artist in weaving, the meaning evidently being that the white, shiny byssus threads were to be woven with similar fine yarns of hyacinth, purple, and crimson, to form figures of cherubim, the appearance of the cloth afterward being that of a heavy damask. V. 2. **The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits and the breadth of one curtain four cubits; and every one of the curtains shall have one measure,** be exactly of the same size. V. 3. **The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another,** five strips should be sewed together side by side to form a large piece twenty-eight cubits long and twenty cubits wide; **and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another.** V. 4. **And thou shalt make loops of blue,** of hyacinth-colored material, **upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvage in the coupling,** along the seam where they were to be attached to each other; **and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second,** at the place where the two should be joined together. V. 5. **Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second,** where it is attached to the first; **that the loops may take hold one of another,** be placed so exactly as to be just opposite one another by pairs. V. 6. **And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold,** clasps to hold the loops together, **and couple the curtains together with the taches; and it shall be one tabernacle,** these fine curtains forming the inner covering. V. 7. **And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering upon the Tabernacle,** the outside covering, or tent proper; **eleven curtains shalt thou make.** V. 8. **The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits and the breadth of one curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure,** of the same size. V. 9. **And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves,** just as it was done in the case of the fine inner covering, the extra length and width serving for the protection of the cherubim cloths, **and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the Tabernacle,** which consequently formed a projection or gable over the entrance. V. 10. **And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one** (large) **curtain that is outmost in the coupling,** along the edge where the curtains were to be attached to each other, **and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second,** the loops likewise being just opposite one another by pairs. V. 11. **And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass,** copper or brass clasps, **and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together,** this covering being the tent proper, **that it may be one.** V. 12. **And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent,** after the covering of the roof had been provided for, **the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back side of the Tabernacle,** to form its rear wall. V. 13. **And a cubit on the one side and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent,** there being a total difference of two cubits between the inner and the outer covering, **it shall hang over the sides of the Tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it.** Thus the north, the south, and the west side of the Tabernacle received its tent-covering. V. 14. **And thou shalt make a**

covering for the tent, a protecting curtain, of rams' skins dyed red, of a tawny color, and a covering above of badgers' skins, of leather made from the skins of some marine animal, probably of the sea-cow. These outer coverings served to shield the tent against wind and weather. Just as God made the Tabernacle His dwelling in the midst of His people in the Old Testament, so His presence is with us to this day in His Word and Sacraments.

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TABERNACLE. — V. 15. **And thou shalt make boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood standing up,** planks of acacia wood that were durable, such as could stand up under the strain of the wind and the frequent handling. V. 16. **Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board.** V. 17. **Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another,** each set of tenons, or small projections, fitting exactly into the corresponding sockets in the base below; **thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the Tabernacle.** V. 18. **And thou shalt make the boards for the Tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward,** the entire length of the Tabernacle thus being thirty cubits. V. 19. **And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards,** these silver feet, or bases, serving to hold the planks upright: **two sockets under one board for his two tenons and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.** V. 20. **And for the second side of the Tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards;** v. 21. **and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board and two sockets under another board,** the north and the south wall of the Tabernacle thus being constructed in exactly the same manner. V. 22. **And for the sides of the Tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards,** for the wall proper. V. 23. **And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the Tabernacle in the two sides,** in such a way as to form a right angle. V. 24. **And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring,** the two planks being dovetailed, or mortised, together at right angles. **Thus shall it be for them both, in this way they should be constructed; they shall be for the two corners,** forming the two rear corners. V. 25. **And they shall be eight boards in the west wall, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets: two sockets under one board and two sockets under another board.** V. 26. **And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood,** cross-bars extending along the walls of the Tabernacle: **five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle,** v. 27. **and five bars for the boards of the other side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the Tabernacle, for the two sides westward.** So the north, the south, and the west wall were each to have five rows of connecting bars, which evidently were passed through large rings. V. 28. **And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end,** passing through the entire length of the framework to give solidity to the structure. V. 29. **And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars; and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold.** V. 30. **And thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount.** This setting up of the Tabernacle included not only an exact copying of the model which Moses had seen on the mountain, but the tent was to agree also with the object and with the significance of the dwelling as the home of God in the midst of His people. This rectangular building, thirty cubits long, ten cubits wide, and ten cubits high, was the sanctuary of Israel for more than four hundred years, and serves as the type of the more perfect tabernacle of heaven, into which Jesus has entered as our Mediator, Heb. 9, 6—10.

THE VEIL AND THE POSITION OF THE APPOINTMENTS. — V. 31. **And thou shalt make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work,** tapestry, or damask, made according to the highest skill of the weaver's art, of byssus and the other costly materials named here; **with cherubim shall it be made,** showing figures of cherubim. V. 32. **And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold; their hooks,** to which the veil should be fastened, **shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.** These were four single upright posts inside the Tabernacle, held in an upright position by their heavy silver bases. V. 33. **And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches,** that is, directly under the seams where the couplings of the goats' hair coverings came together, ten cubits from the west wall, **that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the Ark of the Testimony,** the only piece of furniture which was permitted in this part of the Tabernacle; **and the veil shall divide unto you between the Holy Place,** the eastern end of the Tabernacle, **and the Most Holy,** its western end. V. 34. **And thou shalt put the mercy-seat,** chap. 25, 17, **upon the Ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place.** V. 35. **And thou shalt set the table** for the showbread, the so-called table of *prothesis*, **without the veil,** on its east side, **and the candlestick over against,** opposite, **the table on the side of the Tabernacle toward the south; and thou shalt put the table on the north side** of the tent. V. 36. **And thou shalt make an hanging,** a heavy curtain, **for the door of the tent,** the entrance to the Holy Place, **of blue, and purple, and**

scarlet, and fine twined linen, the fine materials which were used throughout, **wrought with needlework,** that is, woven in stripes or squares and in various geometrical figures formed by them. V. 37. **And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood,** acacia posts from which the door-curtain might be suspended, **and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold; and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass,** or bronze, **for them,** these bases being heavy enough to hold the pillars upright. The double curtain of the Tabernacle indicated that there was as yet no free access to God's throne of grace. But Christ, having entered into the Most Holy Place of heaven through the veil of His flesh, has found an eternal redemption for us, by virtue of which we may now freely enter into the presence of God, assured in advance of His mercy. Heb. 10, 20; 9, 11 ff.

CHAPTER 27.

Further Account of the Tabernacle and Its Court.

The Altar. — V. 1. **And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare,** a form which gave it great solidity; **and the height thereof shall be three cubits.** V. 2. **And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof,** hornlike projections which were firmly attached to the altar, as though growing out of it. They are often mentioned, and their significance appears from the fact that the blood of the sin-offering was put upon them, and that people fleeing for their life took hold of them for their protection, Lev. 4, 7; 1 Kings 1, 50. **His horns shall be of the same,** that is, made of acacia wood, like the body of the altar; **and thou shalt overlay it with brass.** V. 3. **And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes,** the vessels which were used in removing the ashes of the fat, **and his shovels, and his basins,** or bowls, used for sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices, **and his flesh-hooks,** the great prongs for spearing the meat, **and his fire-pans,** in which the live coals for the kindling of the fires were carried: **all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass,** of copper or one of its common alloys. V. 4. **And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass,** probably for the purpose of catching such pieces of the sacrifices as fell from the altar; **and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof,** as sockets for the poles with which the altar was carried. V. 5. **And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath,** the projecting ledge, or shelf, on which the priest stepped when engaged in sacrificing or when replenishing the fire, **that the net may be even to the midst of the altar.** V. 6. **And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass,** with the same metal of which all the instruments and dishes of the altar were made. V. 7. **And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be put upon the two sides of the altar to bear it.** V. 8. **Hollow with boards shalt thou make it; as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.** It is probable that the hollow space inside the altar was always filled with earth, chap. 20, 24, the place for the fire being in the center of this square and far enough from the wooden walls to obviate the danger of setting these afire. This altar was always in plain sight before all the children of Israel, reminding them of the fact that an expiation of sins was needed. The altar of the Christians is the cross of Christ, on which He bare our sins, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, 1 Pet. 2, 24; Heb. 13, 10.

The Court of the Tabernacle. — V. 9. **And thou shalt make the court of the Tabernacle,** an enclosed yard to mark the space set aside for formal worship; **for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen,** curtains made of byssus, **of an hundred cubits long for one side;** v. 10. **and the twenty pillars thereof,** the posts between which the curtains were suspended, **and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets,** the rods connecting the several posts, **shall be of silver.** V. 11. **And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver,** corresponding exactly to the enclosure on the south side of the court. V. 12. **And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits; their pillars ten and their sockets ten.** This was on the side of the court in the rear of the Tabernacle, behind the Most Holy Place. V. 13. **And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward,** where the entrance was, **shall be fifty cubits.** V. 14. **The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits; their pillars three and their sockets three.** V. 15. **And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits; their pillars three and their sockets three.** The entire length of the byssus curtains, which formed the enclosure of the court, thus amounted to one hundred and eighty cubits. V. 16. **And for the gate of the court,** the great and only entrance, toward the east, **shall**

be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework, the same material and workmanship as that used for the door-curtain of the Holy Place; **and their pillars shall be four and their sockets four.** V. 17. **All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver,** the connecting rods were to be of this precious metal; **their hooks shall be of silver and their sockets of brass,** of copper or one of its common alloys, brass or bronze. V. 18. **The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits and the breadth fifty everywhere,** wherever one chose to measure, **and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass.** V. 19. **All the vessels of the Tabernacle in all the service thereof,** as they were employed in sacrificial worship, **and all the pins thereof,** the pegs to which the ropes of the Tabernacle were fastened, **and all the pins of the court,** the pegs which held the guy-ropes of the posts, **shall be of brass.** V. 20. **And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light to cause the lamp to burn always.** The oil used in the Tabernacle was not that pressed out of olives by stamping with the feet or by means of an oil-press, but that which flowed from the ripe olives after they were cut or bruised. This oil was pure and clear, and therefore served well for burning in the Holy Place. V. 21. **In the Tabernacle of the Congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony,** before the Ark of the Covenant, **Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord,** the lamps burned from the time of the evening sacrifice till the next morning. The Tabernacle is here for the first time called the "tent of meeting," because the Lord met with the representatives of the people when He communicated with them from the mercy-seat. **It shall be a statute forever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.** This refers both to the furnishing of the oil on the part of the people and to the lighting of the lamps on the part of the priests. Just as the children of Israel were to be reminded that their light was not to be quenched as long as they remained in the covenant of the Lord, so we Christians should remember that the light of our faith should ever be visible in good works.

CHAPTER 28.

The Vestments of the High Priest.

THE MATERIALS AND THE EPHOD.—V. 1. **And take thou unto thee Aaron, thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel,** a man out of their own midst, **that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office,** as the high priest of the people, **even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons,** who were Aaron's assistants in the capacity of priests. V. 2. **And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron, thy brother,** such as were separated from all ordinary use and to be employed in the service of the Tabernacle only, **for glory and for beauty,** expressive of the high dignity and excellence of the office. V. 3. **And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom** (to the natural skill of the craftsman was added special artistic understanding and ability for this particular work), **that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office.** For consecration the garments were to serve, to set Aaron apart in the functions of his office, and for the service of the priest's work, all this latter being designated by a single verb in the Hebrew. V. 4. **And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a miter, and a girdle,** all these garments being described in this connection and in later ordinances. **And they shall make holy garments for Aaron, thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office.** V. 5. **And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.** In addition to the fine materials which were used in making the precious hangings of the Tabernacle, the artisans were to weave gold threads into the cloth for the priest's garments. V. 6. **And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work,** a masterpiece of the weaver's art. V. 7. **It shall have the two shoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together,** thus forming a kind of vest, but with the two parts distinct. V. 8. **And the curious girdle of the ephod,** the girdle of the fastening, **which is upon it,** firmly attached to it, **shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen,** the ephod with its girdle forming practically a single garment, for the girdle was crossed over the stomach and carried around the waist, to hold the ephod firmly in place. V. 9. **And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel;** v. 10. **six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth,** according to their respective ages, as the twelve sons of Jacob

succeeded one another. V. 11. **With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, thou shalt engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel,** the ancestors of the twelve tribes; **thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold,** in settings which held them firmly all around. V. 12. **And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial.** The two stones with the names of the tribes of Israel engraved upon them, in their golden setting, which was continued in the form of a buckle, or clasp, were to bring the remembrance of the people before the Lord whenever the high priest wore this garment. The entire paragraph is typical, foreshadowing the office of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Clothed with incomparable dignity and glory, Christ performed the work of sacrifice for us, and, by virtue of His atonement, brings our names into remembrance before God, commends us to the Lord's grace.

The Breastplate. — V. 13. **And thou shalt make ouches of gold,** clasps or buckles; v. 14. **and two chains of pure gold at the ends,** attached to the clasps; **of wreathen work shalt thou make them,** by braiding gold wire, **and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches,** so that the buckles, which probably had the form of rosettes, were firmly attached to the braided chains, the entire ornament being intended for holding the breastplate. V. 15. **And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment,** that being its full technical name, **with cunning work,** with the highest artistic workmanship; **after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen shalt thou make it.** V. 16. **Foursquare it shall be being doubled,** folded together to form a sort of pocket; **a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof,** a span being half a cubit. V. 17. **And thou shalt set in it settings of stones,** fill its outer side with rows of precious gems, **even four rows of stones. The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle; this shall be the first row.** V. 18. **And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.** V. 19. **And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.** V. 20. **And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper** (or a chrysolite, a beryl, and a jasper); **they shall be set in gold in their inclosings,** that is, in their settings. The modern names pretty accurately reproduce the Hebrew names, and may be accepted as fairly exact. The settings of the stones seem to have been ornamental clasps, which were of value also in fastening the stones to the heavy cloth of the breastplate. "The twelve precious stones denote the variety, manifoldness, and totality of the natural and gracious gifts bestowed on the people of God, and united in the one spirit of heavenly preciousness." V. 21. **And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes,** corresponding both in number and in names. V. 22. **And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold.** Cp. v. 14. V. 23. **And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate,** evidently above. V. 24. **And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold,** the braids of gold wire, **in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate.** V. 25. **And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches,** in the clasps connected with the onyx stones on the shoulders, **and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod before it.** V. 26. **And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward,** on the lower edge, on the rear, or inner, side, facing the ephod. V. 27. **And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.** The description indicates that these rings were placed on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod in the center below, where it was held together above the girdle. V. 28. **And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof,** that is, the lower rings, **unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue,** with threads of the hyacinth material which was used in the weaving of the cloth, **that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.** It was not only to be prevented from moving up and down, but also from sliding back and forth as it was worn, and from falling forward as the high priest stooped over. V. 29. **And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment,** of judicial sentence, **upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the Holy Place, for a memorial before the Lord continually,** v. 12. V. 30. **And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment,** in the pocket formed by its fold, **the Urim and the Thummim** (light and perfection; or revelation and truth); **and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually,** that

is, the sentence of salvation, or righteousness, and the sentence of judgment; as the high priest he was the mediator between God and the people. Every high priest appearing before the Lord with the Urim and Thummim thereby became the advocate of the people, and usually received from the Lord such illumination as served to protect the children of Israel in their promised rights, Num. 27, 21. Christ is our High Priest. He is our Advocate with the Father; He reveals to us God's light and truth, God's gracious and good will toward us, by which we receive counsel and comfort in dark days. The Word of the Lord is a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our path.

THE GARMENTS PROPER. — V. 31. **And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod,** the robe of office, on which the ephod was fastened, **all of blue,** of the hyacinth-colored material which reminded them of the heavenly origin and character of the high-priestly office. This outer garment reached to the knees, leaving the skirts of the inner garment in plain sight. V. 32. **And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof; it shall have a binding of woven work,** a sort of tape or heavy border, **round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon,** of a linen shirt worn by soldiers, **that it be not rent.** V. 33. **And beneath, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates,** ornaments of that shape, **of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about,** which gave forth a musical tinkle as the high priest walked and the skirts of this garment swung back and forth. V. 34. **A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about,** the two ornaments fastened alternately. V. 35. **And it shall be upon Aaron to minister; and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the Holy Place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.** For as the pomegranates symbolized the sweet odor and the refreshing taste of the Word of God, Prov. 25, 11, so the golden bells symbolized the beautiful sound of the revelation and proclamation of God. The high priest, therefore, as the representative of the congregation and the bearer of the divine testimony, was not to undertake the work of his office without this official vestment, under penalty of death. V. 36. **And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.** This was the high priest's badge of office, a very important part of his priestly insignia, the crown of holiness, chap. 39, 30. V. 37. **And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the miter; upon the forefront of the miter it shall be,** held in place by a hyacinth-colored string. V. 38. **And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.** The main function of the high priest's office was to expiate sins, also such transgressions as were connected with the sacrifices of the people. **And it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.** Even so the expiation made by our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, removes from us all transgressions, including even that guilt of weakness which is connected with our Christian profession and worship. V. 39. **And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen,** the tunic proper, of white byssus, reaching to the ankles; **and thou shalt make the miter,** the high turban or headdress, **of fine linen,** of byssus; **and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework,** woven out of the same precious materials from which the ephod was made. V. 40. **And for Aaron's sons,** as members of the order of priests, **thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them,** caps instead of the more elaborate turban of Aaron, **for glory and for beauty,** to signify both the great dignity and the peculiar excellence of Jehovah's worship. The garments of the ordinary priests were pure white with the exception of the girdle; for the color of purity was exceptionally appropriate in the case of the priests, who were continually engaged in making offerings in behalf of the people. V. 41. **And thou shalt put them upon Aaron, thy brother, and his sons with him,** each one was to receive the garments intended for his special office; **and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them,** the application of oil signified the setting apart, the transmitting of the rights and duties, the inducting into office, **and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office.** V. 42. **And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness,** cp. chap. 20, 26; **from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach,** for these parts must be kept covered on account of both natural or hereditary and acquired guilt. Not only every act of shamelessness, but even everything that called attention to sexual matters was to be avoided in the sanctuary. V. 43. **And they shall be upon Aaron and upon his sons when they come in unto the Tabernacle of the Congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the Holy Place,** in their work of offering sacrifices, **that they bear not iniquity, and die. It shall be a statute forever unto him and his seed after him.** Cp. Lev. 8. All believers of the New Testament have the rank of priests before God, and their garments have been made white by the blood of the Lamb.

CHAPTER 29.

Of the Consecration of the Priests and Some Sacrifices.

Order of Consecration. — V. 1. **And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office;** this was the order of consecration which was to be in force for all times in the Jewish Church: **Take one young bullock and two rams without blemish,** free from sickness and any physical defects, v. 2. **and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened, tempered with oil,** olive-oil being mixed in when the dough was prepared, **and wafers unleavened,** very thin, crackerlike sacrificial cakes, **anointed with oil; of wheaten flour shalt thou make them,** a specification which should be noted very carefully. V. 3. **And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams,** the meal-offering, or bloodless offering, being represented as well as the burnt offering. V. 4. **And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** apparently inside the entrance of the court, **and shalt wash them with water,** the external cleansing symbolizing the inner purification; for only he that is hallowed inwardly is fit for holy service. V. 5. **And thou shalt take the garments,** which the Lord had described in detail chap. 28, **and put upon Aaron the coat,** the long robe of white byssus, **and the robe of the ephod,** the hyacinth-colored garment that reached to the knees, **and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod;** v. 6. **and thou shalt put the miter upon his head, and put the holy crown,** the diadem of holiness inscribed to the Lord, upon the miter, chap. 28, 36. V. 7. **Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him,** this form of induction into office being used not only in the case of the high priest, but also in that of prophets and kings. The oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who alone is able to sanctify man and prepare him properly for the service of the Sanctuary. V. 8. **And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them,** the characteristic white byssus garments of the common priests. V. 9. **And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons;** for in this one article of dress the likeness between the ordinary priests and the high priest was shown, both classes using an embroidered girdle wrought in the four colors of the Sanctuary, **and put the bonnets on them,** bind the miter on Aaron and the caps on his sons. **And the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. And thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons,** literally, fill their hands, invest them with the dignity and the obligations of their office. V. 10. **And thou shalt cause a bullock,** the sacrificial animal mentioned above, **to be brought before the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock,** in a gesture symbolizing the transfer of their own sins and guilt to the sacrificial animal, for, indeed, it was necessary that their own sins be expiated before they could offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. V. 11. **And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** inside the entrance of the court. V. 12. **And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger,** smear it upon these peculiar projections of the large altar before the Holy Place, **and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar,** the blood of the animal thus offered to the Lord taking, in a symbolic manner, the place of the sinner's blood. V. 13. **And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards,** that is found in the abdominal cavity, **and the caul that is above the liver,** the fatty gathering between the liver and the duodenum, **and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar,** the rich bloom of life falling to Jehovah as His part. V. 14. **But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung shalt thou burn with fire without the camp; it is a sin-offering;** the complete destruction probably represented the sinner's complete break with his past life. V. 15. **Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram,** as in the case of the bullock, v. 10. V. 16. **And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar,** as a token of complete surrender to the Lord. V. 17. **And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces,** dissect it according to the rules of the craft, **and wash the inwards of him and his legs,** that is, the thighs, **and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head,** the head forming the center of the pile. V. 18. **And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar,** after the removal of the skin and the unclean parts; **it is a burnt offering unto the Lord; it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** An odor of pleasantness was this fire-offering unto Jehovah, because it signified that the priests were dedicating themselves with body and soul to the service of the Lord. V. 19. **And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram,** as before. V. 20. **Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons,** that is, upon the ear-lap, next to the opening, **and upon the thumb of their right hand and upon the**

great toe of their right foot, the gestures conveying the duties of obedience, of willing work, and of a walk according to the precepts of God's holy Law, **and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.** V. 21. **And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him; and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.** V. 22. **Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump,** the heavy tail of fat which is a characteristic of the sheep referred to, **and the fat that covereth the inwards,** the fat of the abdominal net, **and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder,** "these parts representing the vigor of life, its comfort, and its conscientiousness," and the shoulder-piece being included here, though it otherwise belonged to the priests, for a special reason; **for it is a ram of consecration.** The priests here voluntarily returned to Jehovah a part of the emoluments belonging to them. V. 23. **And one loaf of bread and one cake of oiled bread and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord,** vv. 2 and 3; Lev. 8, 26; v. 24. **and thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and shalt wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord,** moving them up and down, and back and forth, in token of their voluntary surrender to the Lord. V. 25. **And thou,** Moses, **shalt receive them of their hands,** the gifts of Israel and of Israel's priests, **and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor before the Lord; it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** this sacrifice indicating an important part of the priests' work. V. 26. **And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration,** of the sacrifice of fulness, **and wave it for a wave-offering before the Lord; and it shall be thy part,** as the prince and leader of the people. V. 27. **And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering,** the former being merely moved back and forth in the gesture of giving, while the latter was also lifted up high to indicate the willing surrender to Jehovah, **which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons;** for it seems that all the rest of the body went with the thigh, as the priests' part. V. 28. **And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute forever from the children of Israel; for it is an heave-offering; and it shall be an heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace-offerings, even their heave-offering unto the Lord.** These parts were taken from the peace-offerings and the heave-offerings of the children of Israel, lifted off to be given to the priests. This signified in general that the priests were to be nourished from the sacrifices of Israel, even as the Lord has now ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. V. 29. **And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them,** the office of high priest being hereditary in Aaron's family. V. 30. **And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days,** just as it was done in the consecration of Aaron, Lev. 8, 35, **when he cometh into the Tabernacle of the Congregation to minister in the Holy Place.** Aaron was a type of the true High Priest, Jesus Christ, who was anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, as the true Mediator between God and sinful mankind. The sons of Aaron are types of the believers of the New Testament, who have been made priests before God and the Father and serve Him in holiness and righteousness, as it pleases Him.

THE PORTION OF THE PRIESTS. — V. 31. **And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the Holy Place;** it was sacred food intended to nourish them during the week of consecration. V. 32. **And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** that being their official place of abode when they were engaged in their work. V. 33. **And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made,** the parts of the daily offerings of consecration, which also served for expiation, **to consecrate and to sanctify them. But a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy,** set apart for the worship of the Lord. V. 34. **And if aught of the flesh of the consecrations or of the bread remain unto the morning,** the priests finding themselves unable to eat all, **then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.** Once being set aside for the Lord's use, it should not be returned to profane use. V. 35. **And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron and to his sons according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them.** Moses was held responsible for the proper and complete execution of God's orders. V. 36. **And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin-offering for atonement,** as on the first day, vv. 10 and 11; **and thou shalt cleanse the altar when thou hast made an atonement for it;** the altar was also included in the rites of expiation and dedication; **and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.** V. 37. **Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar and sanctify it; and it shall**

be an altar most holy; whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy, set apart and dedicated to the Lord. Thus was the altar, in a symbolic sense, cleansed from defilement, and placed exclusively in the service of Jehovah, designed for permanent use in His service.

The Daily Burnt Offering. — V. 38. **Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar: two lambs of the first year day by day continually.** This sacrifice is here ordered, because it was to be made daily just as soon as the Tabernacle should be finished and dedicated. V. 39. **The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even,** literally, between the evenings, at twilight, which the Jews later explained as referring to the time between noon and sundown, for which reason their evening worship took place about three o'clock in the afternoon. V. 40. **And with the one lamb a tenth deal** (about two and one half quarts) **of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin** (about one quart) **of beaten oil,** of the fine oil which was not forcibly pressed out of the olives, but allowed to flow out freely after they had been crushed or cut; **and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering.** V. 41. **And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat-offering of the morning and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** This daily sacrifice signified that the life of the entire people was surrendered to Jehovah day by day. V. 42. **This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak there unto thee.** At the altar of burnt offering the Lord wanted to give evidence of His presence with His people; there He would meet them by dealing with their representatives in person. V. 43. **And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the Tabernacle** (or rather, Israel) **shall be sanctified by My glory.** V. 44. **And I will sanctify the Tabernacle of the Congregation and the altar; I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me in the priest's office.** V. 45. **And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.** This gracious promise is all the more beautiful by reason of the fact that the Lord did not confine His presence in their midst to the Most Holy Place, but gave them the assurance that He would also look upon their daily burnt offering in mercy, thereby always emphasizing anew the covenant made with them. V. 46. **And they shall know that I am the Lord, their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord, their God.** As the Lord lived in the midst of His people of old in the Sanctuary dedicated to His name, so He dwells in the midst of His believers at the present time in His Word and Sacraments.

CHAPTER 30.

Ordinances Concerning Public Worship.

The Altar of Incense. — V. 1. **And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon; of shittim wood shalt thou make it,** of the same Arabian acacia wood which was to be used for all the wooden appointments. V. 2. **A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be; and two cubits shall be the height thereof; the horns thereof shall be of the same.** It was also ornamented with small, hornlike projections, the symbols of power. V. 3. **And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, that is, its plate, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about,** a heavy, decorated molding of gold, similar to that on the ark and on the table of showbread. Since the entire altar was so completely covered with gold, it was often designated simply as the golden altar, chap. 39, 38; 40, 5. 26; Num. 4, 11. V. 4. **And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it,** rings set solidly into the material of the altar; **and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal.** V. 5. **And thou shalt make the staves,** the carrying poles, **of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.** V. 6. **And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the Ark of the Testimony,** so that it occupied a position between the large candlestick and the table of showbread, **before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.** The altar of incense was thus brought into a direct and intimate relation to the mercy-seat, so close to the Most Holy Place that it could be considered as a part of its equipment in the wider sense, 1 Kings 6, 22; Heb. 9, 4. V. 7. **And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning; when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it,** that is, when he trims and cleans the lamps of the large candlestick. V. 8. **And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even,** putting back the lamps in place at the time of the evening sacrifice, chap. 29, 41, **he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations,** as regularly as the sacrifice of

burnt offering was made, chap. 29, 42. V. 9. **Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon,** such as was not ordered for that purpose by Jehovah nor such as was not made according to His precept, **nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering,** the unbloody sacrifices of baked or fried cakes; **neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon.** V. 10. **And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations, namely,** on the great Day of Atonement; **it is most holy unto the Lord.** The altar of incense thus served a double purpose: it was in use daily for the offering of incense, the aromatic substance whose odor was pleasant to the Lord, since it signified the prayer of the saints; and it served on the great Day of Atonement for the dedication of the blood of expiation, before the high priest entered the Most Holy Place. We Christians also let our prayers rise to the Lord like incense, that is, in the name of Jesus Christ the Savior, knowing that they are pleasing to the Lord for His sake.

THE CHURCH TAX. — V. 11. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 12. **When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number,** whenever a census of the people was taken, **then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them,** a sum of money by which they were to redeem themselves from the personal service which they really owed to the Lord in the house of worship; **that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them.** The refusal or the neglect to pay this assessment would make a person liable to the punishment of God. V. 13. **This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered,** every one that is included in the census, **half a shekel after the shekel of the Sanctuary; (a shekel is twenty gerahs;) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord.** Every male Israelite was to be enrolled in the army of Jehovah after he had reached the age of twenty years and be obliged to pay this assessment of half a shekel standard weight, that is, about 32 cents annually. This tax was used for the maintenance of the sacrificial service, since the expenses connected with the Jewish form of worship must have been quite large. The payment of this fee distinguished the people of the Lord from the heathen that knew nothing of Him. V. 14. **Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord.** V. 15. **The rich shall not give more,** as they might have felt tempted to do, in order to display their wealth, **and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel,** for even the poorest could afford that much for the Lord, **when they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.** Free-will offerings were acceptable at all other times, and were made in large quantities for the purpose of building the Tabernacle, but here the sum was definitely fixed. V. 16. **And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** for the perpetual service of God in the building devoted to His worship; **that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.** They were ever to be reminded of the fact that they owed their souls to the Lord, that they were in His debt to the extent of their souls: in this sense the assessment was a ransom, money paid in atonement. To this day the Christians give evidence of the thankfulness of their hearts to God for the perfect atonement which was assured to them through Jesus Christ, also through their gifts and sacrifices.

THE LAVER. — V. 17. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 18. **Thou shalt also make a laver of brass,** of copper or one of its chief alloys, **and his foot also of brass, to wash withal; and thou shalt put it between the Tabernacle of the Congregation and the altar,** between the altar of burnt offerings in the court and the entrance to the Holy Place, **and thou shalt put water therein.** For this laver, or great wash-basin, the Israelitish women brought their metal mirrors, chap. 38, 8, glad to contribute what they could for this sacred purpose. V. 19. **For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat;** v. 20. **when they go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** before entering the Holy Place, **they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord;** v. 21. **so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not; and it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him** (Aaron) **and to his seed throughout their generations.** The description indicates that the basin was a reservoir for water rather than a basin in which the priests performed their ablutions. No priest was to touch holy things with unclean, defiled hands. All this symbolized the inward purification effected by the Lord, even as we Christians have a never-failing fountain which cleanses us from all sin and impurity, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

THE OIL OF OINTMENT. — V. 22. **Moreover, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 23. **Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels** (about fifteen pounds), **and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels,** v. 24. **and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of**

the Sanctuary, the standard of weight among the children of Israel at that time, **and of oil olive an hin,** a little more than a gallon; v. 25. **and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary,** the man skilled in the preparing of spices and ointments. **It shall be an holy anointing oil.** The myrrh gum as it is found in the Arabian desert was to be mixed with costly, sweet-smelling spices, some of the finest products of the land; for this holy anointing oil was to excel in richness. "It might be said of the myrrh that it denotes that fine, higher kind of pain which enables one to overcome natural pain; cinnamon denotes the warmest feeling of light and life; the bitterness of calamus might also be noticed; but the significance of the cassia is difficult to determine." (Lange.) V. 26. **And thou shalt anoint the Tabernacle of the Congregation therewith, and the Ark of the Testimony,** v. 27. **and the table** (of showbread) **and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense,** v. 28. **and the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels,** all the instruments used in its service, **and the laver and his foot.** V. 29. **And thou shalt sanctify them,** set them apart for the worship of the Lord, **that they may be most holy; whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy,** consecrated to the Lord. The oil of ointment was declared to be holy, because the recipe for its making was given by the Lord and because it was used for holy purposes. V. 30. **And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office.** V. 31. **And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations,** reserved for use in the Sanctuary and its service. V. 32. **Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured,** that is, it was not to be used for ordinary anointing of the body, **neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it,** they were not to compound their oil for private use in these proportions; **it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.** V. 33. **Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger,** upon a layman, as contrasted with a priest, **shall even be cut off from his people.** The oil of ointment was a symbol of the Holy Ghost, who alone is able effectually to prepare a person for the service of the Lord, for the working of truly good works.

The Holy Incense. — V. 34. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte,** a sweet-smelling gum similar to myrrh, **and onycha,** the pulverized shell of a mollusk, **and galbanum,** a bitter resin gained from a shrub of the desert, which strengthens the odor of the incense; **these sweet spices with pure frankincense,** which to this day is gathered from a small tree in Arabia Felix and the surrounding country; **of each shall there be a like weight,** the ingredients were to be mixed in equal parts. V. 35. **And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary,** as in the case of the ointment, **tempered together,** carefully cleaned from all impurities, **pure,** without strange admixtures, **and holy;** v. 36. **and thou shalt beat some of it very small,** literally, pound it into powder, **and put it before the testimony in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, where I will meet with thee,** before the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place. **It shall be unto you most holy.** V. 37. **And as for the perfume,** this holy incense, **which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord.** V. 38. **Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto,** to enjoy its pleasant odor, **shall even be cut off from his people.** That which was consecrated to the Lord was not to be made common by profane use. Thus also prayer, which was symbolized by the incense, is never to be made in the spirit of levity, though it may now be sent up to the throne of God anywhere and at any time.

CHAPTER 31.

The Chief Artisans. The Sabbath Ordinance Repeated.

The Master Craftsmen Engaged. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,** the grandson of the influential man in his tribe, one of Moses' right-hand men, chap. 17, 10; 24, 14; v. 3. **and I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,** in every craft connected with the art of building **and equipping the Tabernacle,** v. 4. **to devise cunning works,** to execute artistic designs, **to work in gold and in silver and in brass,** the precious and costly metals which were used for the various parts of the equipment, v. 5. **and in cutting of stones, to set them,** the work of the jeweler and the silversmith, **and in carving of timber,** another branch of artistic achievement, **to work in all manner of workmanship.** In this man technical knowledge was united with practical ability; he could not only devise and plan artistic work in all its details, but he could also supervise its proper execution. His natural talents had been sanctified by the influence of the Lord and conse-

crated to His service, a combination which, even now, makes the best church architects and the most excellent artists. V. 6. **And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee,** Aholiab being a master not only in metal, stone, and woodwork, but also an artist in fancy weaving: v. 7. **the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the Ark of the Testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture,** the sacred vessels, **of the Tabernacle,** v. 8. **and the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture,** the instruments and vessels needed for keeping it in order, **and the altar of incense,** v. 9. **and the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot,** v. 10. **and the cloths of service,** the special garments of the high priest which he alone wore in the service of the Tabernacle and Temple, **and the holy garments for Aaron, the priest,** which he had in common with the ordinary priests, **and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office,** v. 11. **and the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the Holy Place; according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.** The entire work was entrusted to the Jewish artisans under the leadership of these two masters, for it was necessary that the workmanship throughout be of the very best. It is well-pleasing to the Lord if work done in His service is performed with painstaking care, as being really worth while.

CONCERNING THE CELEBRATION OF THE SABBATH. — V. 12. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 13. **Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily, My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.** Through the rest of the Sabbath-day the children of Israel were to remain conscious of the fact that it was Jehovah that sanctified them, the Sabbath being the day especially consecrated to His service. V. 14. **Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore,** observe it most religiously; **for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death,** the desecration or profanation of the day consisting chiefly in not observing the rest enjoined by the Lord; **for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people,** the breaking of the Sabbath being a capital crime. V. 15. **Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest,** a day devoted entirely to rest from physical labor, **holy to the Lord; whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death.** V. 16. **Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations,** their resting should make the day a real Sabbath, **for a perpetual covenant.** V. 17. **It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever,** the public symbol and expression of the relation between Jehovah and Israel; **for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.** As the text expressly notes, this phase of the Third Commandment, according to which one special day was set apart for total rest, concerned only the children of Israel. For the believers of the New Testament the observance of the Third Commandment consists in this, that we gladly hear and learn the Word of God. He that despises preaching and God's Word destroys himself by starving his soul. V. 18. **And He** (God) **gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.** In what manner this engraving was done is not revealed, the fact alone being stated. The Decalog is the word and will of the Lord, of which He Himself says that heaven and earth will pass away before one tittle of this will is invalidated. The ministry of the New Testament is written with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart, 2 Cor. 3, 3.

CHAPTER 32.

The Idolatry of the People.

THE GOLDEN CALF. — V. 1. **And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount,** the text implies that they had waited for his return in vain, and therefore foolishly concluded that he had forsaken them, **the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron,** not in the spirit of an orderly congregation, but of a mob bent on violence, **and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us! For as for this Moses,** as they now contemptuously called him, **the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot** (know) **not what is become of him.** They had given up all hopes regarding the leadership of Moses, and therefore proposed to establish their own gods, fashioned according to the ideas of their perverted mind. V. 2. **And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters,** the heavy ring pendants worn according to Oriental fashion, **and bring them unto me.** If Aaron, as some commentators state, made this demand in a spirit of cunning, thinking that the great sacrifice

which this involved would keep the people from carrying out their plan, he found himself badly in error. V. 3. **And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.** Swept along by a wave of mob activity, the people showed a fanatical readiness to part with the possessions which they prized most highly. It is the same tendency which may be observed in the case of the many cults and heresies of our days, which spread with such alarming rapidity and command such great resources. V. 4. **And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving-tool after he had made it a molten calf.** After melting the golden rings, Aaron cast a rough figure of a young ox, or bullock, and then finished the outline with the tools of an engraver. It may not have been a work of art, but it served its purpose. **And they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.** In these words the people proclaimed the idol as god and rejected the true and only God. V. 5. **And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord.** The name of Jehovah was introduced to cover up the evil, the implication being that he, Aaron, at least, had erected this figure in honor of Jehovah, the true God. St. Paul expressly calls the children of Israel idolaters in speaking of this incident, 1 Cor. 10, 7. V. 6. **And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings,** in honor of the false god, **and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink,** in a joyful sacrificial meal, **and rose up to play,** in merry festive games, in wilful abandon. The worship of the golden calf is a picture of the idolatry of our days, for these are the gods of the world, mammon, gold, money, luxury, eating, drinking, lascivious merriment. It is the very height of hypocrisy if Christians take part in the idolatrous ways of the world and then try to cover their sin with a sanctimonious behavior.

Moses Intercedes for the People. — V. 7. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.** The omniscient, omnipresent God saw the transgression of the people and stated this fact to Moses as the representative and the mediator of Israel. V. 8. **They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them,** their guilt was increased by the great hurry which they displayed in choosing the ways of idolatry; **they have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.** With the children of Israel engaged in wilful idolatry, it was impossible for the work on the mountain to continue, and the indignation of the Lord breaks forth like a flood. V. 9. **And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people,** have observed it very closely, **and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people,** as rigid of neck as an unwilling draught-animal, chap. 33, 3. 5; 34, 9; Deut. 9, 6. V. 10. **Now, therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them** in revenge and punishment; **and I will make of thee a great nation;** of the entire people only Moses and his family were to remain, as the stock, or nucleus, of a new nation. It was an expression of just anger, a threat of righteous punishment. V. 11. **And Moses besought the Lord, his God,** he showed himself the real priestly advocate of the people. The prospect of being the progenitor of a great nation held no allurements for him, as he began to plead for his people, **and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?** Note how skilfully Moses parries the Lord's statement in v. 7, as he reminds Him that it was His, Jehovah's, great power, His mighty hand, that had effected the deliverance out of the land of Egypt. V. 12. **Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out,** that is, for misfortune, for their destruction, **to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?** This was an appeal to the honor of the Lord. **Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people.** V. 13. **Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.** This was a reminder of the faithfulness and truth, the trust in which had sustained the patriarchs during the long years when they were strangers in the land of Canaan. Note also that Moses omits all reference to himself; he does not think of urging his own work as a consideration to influence the Lord. V. 14. **And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people,** although, as it seems, He did make known His change of mind at this time, as vv. 30—34 indicate. As Moses here acted in the capacity of advocate for the sinful people, so Jesus, at once the propitiation for our sins and our Advocate with God, pleads for us with His heavenly Father.

The Wrath of Moses. — V. 15. **And Moses turned and went down from the mount, and the two tables of testimony were in his hand.** The tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written, engraved, or chiseled, in the stone by the finger of God. V. 16. **And the tables were the work of God,** hewn or fashioned by God Himself, **and the writing was the writing of God,**

graven upon the tables. V. 17. **And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.** It was characteristic of the soldier that his thoughts were engaged with matters of war. V. 18. **And he** (Moses) **said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome,** it was neither the triumphant shout of the victors nor the answering moans of the conquered, **but the noise of them that sing do I hear,** the sound of antiphonal songs which the people shouted as they frolicked in their idolatrous dance. V. 19. **And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp,** so that he could distinguish things clearly, **that he saw the calf and the dancing,** for the riotous celebration was now at its height; **and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount,** at its foot, where it merged into the plain. His action symbolized the fact that Israel had broken the covenant of the Lord. V. 20. **And he took the calf which they had made, and burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.** So he not only demonstrated to them the nothingness of their god, but even had them drink down, devour, the idol, thus humbling them and putting them to shame openly for some time. V. 21. **And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee,** what kind of sorcery, what means of persuasion did they employ, **that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?** It was a sharp question, a direct accusation, making Aaron the moral author of the sin and the seducer of the people. V. 22. **And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot. Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.** It is always the sinner's convenient excuse to blame the transgression on some one else's wickedness. V. 23. **For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this man Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.** V. 24. **And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.** He speaks of the calf as almost an accidental image produced by the fire without his design, without his knowledge and will. Thus Aaron added to his first sin the second of attempting to evade the accusation and casting the blame on others, whose spiritual knowledge did not equal his own. True repentance will not make use of such schemes. Cp. Deut. 9, 20.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE IDOLATERS. — V. 25. **And when Moses saw that the people were naked;** they had stripped themselves of their ornaments **and had also neglected to keep the** camp properly protected; **(for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies,** he had given them free reign in their festivities, a fact which caused the camp to be unprotected and exposed the children of Israel to derision in more than one respect;) v. 26. **then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord's side;** who will take the Lord's part? **Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.** They were the first to turn from their sin in true repentance and to show their willingness to make amends for their sin. V. 27. **And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp,** that is, passing through the length of the camp twice, going and returning, **and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.** No matter how close the relationship, there was to be indiscriminate slaughter: all those whom it would strike should die. V. 28. **And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.** V. 29. **For Moses had said,** before the men of Levi went forth to the slaughter, **Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son and upon his brother, that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day.** They were to dedicate themselves to the Lord by this implicit and unquestioning obedience, which disregarded the ties of even the closest relationship in order to secure the blessing of the Lord. For the Christians also it often becomes necessary to deny the nearest relatives, namely, when the alternative is Christ or the world. Obedience toward our Lord must always be the first consideration.

MOSES AGAIN INTERCEDES FOR THE PEOPLE. — V. 30. **And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.** He indicates that their crime may still be covered by means of an expiation, and states his willingness to make an effort to obtain this atonement. V. 31. **And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold!** It was a flagrant case of idolatry in a form which the Lord had expressly condemned, chap. 20, 23. V. 32. **Yet, now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin —.** The greatness of his love for the people, on the one hand, and his awe of God, on the other, does not permit him to finish the sentence. It was a most profound appeal for mercy. **And if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written,** out of the book of life. Here is a case of magnanimous nobleness equaled only by Paul, Rom. 9, 3, and surpassed only by

Christ in His unexcelled devotion, in His incomprehensible sacrifice. V. 33. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.** He would not accept the sacrifice offered by Moses, He would not offer up the just for the unjust in this case. V. 34. **Therefore go now, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee,** all of which indicated that He would spare the people at this time. **Behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee,** the Son of God Himself accompanied the army on its march; **nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.** The time would come when their period of grace would be at an end, when the Lord's revenge would strike them, when His judicial visitation would be upon them. V. 35. **And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made.** The punishment meted out by the children of Levi was sufficient for the time being. God has patience with the sinners, with those that reject the Savior, for the sake of that very Redeemer. But when the sinners persist in refusing the grace offered to them, and despise the patience of God, death and destruction will finally come upon them.

CHAPTER 33.

The Lord's Anger over the People. — His Kindness to Moses.

The Sorrow of the People over Their Sins. V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it.** The intercession of Moses in behalf of the children of Israel had been successful: the Lord, in accordance with the promise given to the patriarchs, did not destroy the people, did not even withdraw the special Messianic feature of the promise, although His pardon, for the present, was limited. V. 2. **And I will send an angel before thee,** cp. chap. 32, 34; **and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:** v. 3. **unto a land flowing with milk and honey,** distinguished for its extraordinary fruitfulness; **for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee in the way.** Because they had shown themselves a people with a rigid neck, chap. 32, 9, as incorrigible as a stubborn draught-animal, therefore the Lord, for the time being, withdrew His presence from their midst. His purpose was to lead the people to a proper estimate of their guilt and thus to full repentance; for as it was, their wilful transgressions continually challenged destruction. This announcement had the desired effect. V. 4. **And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned,** they showed their deep sorrow by putting on the garments of mourning; **and no man did put on him his ornaments.** The repentance was general and sincere. V. 5. **For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment and consume thee; that had been the Lord's intention when His anger first flared up, chap. 32, 10; therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.** The Lord demanded this evidence of sincere repentance; for if they had refused and He had appeared in their midst for as much as a moment, their total destruction would have resulted. V. 6. **And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the Mount Horeb.** From this time on, from Mount Horeb onwards, the children of Israel discarded rings, bracelets, and all other jewelry, as in a period of mourning, to remind themselves always of the guilt which they had loaded upon themselves through similar ornaments at Mount Horeb. V. 7. **And Moses took the tabernacle, his own tent, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the "tent of meeting." Until matters were adjusted between the Lord and the people and the building of the Sanctuary could be undertaken, his own tent had to serve the purpose. The people were to become more deeply conscious of their guilt and of their separation from Jehovah, and yet Moses wanted to keep the way open for the renewal of the covenant, by giving the people an opportunity to keep in touch with Jehovah. **And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the Tabernacle of the Congregation which was without the camp.** This was the first step in bringing the penitent people to a new life, that individuals went out to consult with Jehovah, instead of following their own ideas and opinions. V. 8. **And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Moses until he was gone into the Tabernacle.** This was a second sign of repentance, the expression of reverence with which the people accompanied the going of Moses into the tent of meeting. V. 9. **And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the Tabernacle, the cloudy pillar,** which served to show the way by day, **descended and stood at the door of the Tabernacle; and the Lord,** who was present in the pillar, **talked with Moses.** V. 10. **And all the people saw**

the cloudy pillar stand at the Tabernacle door, in the place which was afterward occupied by the altar of burnt offering. And all the people rose up and worshiped, every man in his tent door. That was the third proof of their sincerity and of their desire to enter into the former relations with Jehovah once more. V. 11. **And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.** It was not a communicating from a distance, nor through any mediating person or agency, but the perfect intercourse of God with the friend of God, although not in the full revelation of His glory. **And he** (Moses) **turned again into the camp, after having communicated with God; but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tabernacle.** To him, as an unmarried man, was entrusted the care of the Sanctuary by day and by night. We learn here that unfaithfulness, idolatry, excludes a person from the intercourse, from the fellowship with God, and that it is the will of God that all transgressors should turn to Him in sincere and earnest repentance.

THE LORD PROMISES HIS GRACIOUS PRESENCE. V. 12. **And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people; and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me.** The people having given such unmistakable evidences of a real change of heart, Moses thought the time opportune to intercede once more and, if possible, to have the mercy of the Lord turn back to His people, as of old. **Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight.** Upon this promise Moses bases his assurance in making his plea, just as we Christians come before Him with all boldness, trusting in the grace belonging to us in Christ Jesus. V. 13. **Now, therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight; and consider that this nation is Thy people.** Moses wanted to know how the Lord intended to lead His people, what intentions He had with regard to their further journey, just in what way the Angel of the Lord would assume the leadership, incidentally reminding the Lord that the children of Israel were His people, His commonwealth. By the granting of this prayer the fact of his having found mercy in God's sight would be confirmed. V. 14. **And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.** The face of Jehovah, the Angel of the Presence, the Son of God Himself, was to be the Leader of the people. Under His leadership the people were to reach the Land of Promise and there settle down to a life of peace and plenty, Deut. 3, 20. Thus the Lord heard the prayer of His servant. V. 15. **And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.** It would be better to remain in the wilderness, to die in the desert, than to attempt a continuance of the journey without the presence of Jehovah. V. 16. **For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us?** The presence of the Lord would be a sign, a guarantee, to Moses and the people that the Lord had really forgiven their great sin and turned back to them in mercy. **So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.** The visible guidance of God would be a sign to all men that Israel was the nation of God's choice. V. 17. **And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name.** The boldness of faith shown by Moses vanquished even the Lord, and He yielded to this request, because He cherished Moses with an extraordinary love. V. 18. **And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.** The success of Moses made him so bold that he desired to see the revelation of God in the totality of His attributes, as Isaiah saw it in the vision, chap. 6. V. 19. **And he said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee,** He would reveal Himself in the greatness of His excellence, **and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee,** He would call out, explain to Him, Jehovah's name; **and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.** The entire revelation, as promised to Moses, was an act of God's free grace and mercy, upon which no man, not even Moses, could lay claim. V. 20. **And He said, Thou canst not see My face,** Moses could not endure to look upon the full revelation of God's glory; **for there shall no man see Me and live.** No mortal, sinful man could survive a glance into the face of the holy God. It is only after we have become partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1, 4, and have entered into the state of glorification, Phil. 3, 21, that we shall see Him face to face, as He is, 1 John 3, 2. V. 21. **And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock;** v. 22. **and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by;** v. 23. **and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen.** While standing in the cave or in the cleft of the rock, under the protecting power of the Lord, Moses was to see the afterglow, the reflection, of the Lord's glory, which would enable him to form some conception of the surpassing beauty and excellence of the divine majesty, as he would see it later, in the life of glorification. For us Christians it is a matter of great comfort that the Son of God, our Savior Jesus Christ, protects us from wrath and judgment, and will finally bring us to the home above, where we shall see His glory, world without end.

CHAPTER 34.

Moses Witnesses the Lord's Glory.

The Glorious Vision. — V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, which the Lord Himself had fashioned: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.** Moses was familiar with the form and workmanship of the original tables, and could therefore make the second set after that pattern. V. 2. **And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount.** The covenant relation between God and the people having been restored by the Lord's pardon, the giving of the covenant ordinances could now be resumed. V. 3. **And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before the mount,** that is, anywhere in its neighborhood. The entire mountain was again shut off to the people, as before the giving of the Law, chap. 19, 12. 13. 20—23. V. 4. **And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first. And Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone,** all ready for the engraving by the hand of God. V. 5. **And the Lord descended in the cloud,** in the pillar in which His glory usually was hidden, **and stood with him there,** outside the cloud, **and proclaimed the name of the Lord,** called out and explained the name Jehovah. All this while He covered Moses with His hand, as the latter stood in the cleft of the rock. V. 6. **And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed,** delivered His great sermon on the name of the Lord, as Luther says, **The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,** v. 7. **keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.** That is the one side of the Lord's essence: Jehovah, the mighty God, the same yesterday and to-day and forever, whose loving-kindness is shown in compassion on the miserable, in grace toward the repentant sinners, in patience toward human weakness, in truth and faithfulness in the keeping of His gracious promises. But the other side is also brought out: **And that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation.** To those that reject His mercy the Lord proves Himself a stern Judge, who does not let the least offense go unpunished, but avenges the insults to His holiness not only upon the fathers, but also upon the children that follow in the footsteps of their wicked parents, and that down to the great-grandchildren. Cp. chap. 20, 5. This proclamation of the goodness, the mercy, the grace, the truth and faithfulness of God continues throughout the period of the New Testament; it is a testimony of the living God, who, however, states, on the other hand, as well: He who rejects His grace will receive everlasting condemnation. V. 8. **And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped,** overcome by the glory of the vision. What he saw is not described in detail, for it is beyond human understanding, even as Paul heard words which no man can utter. God here gave to Moses a taste of the future glory which will be revealed to all those who remain faithful to the end. V. 9. **And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us;** he pleaded for the personal presence of God in the midst of the people; **for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance.** Note that Moses includes himself with the people, placing himself under their guilt, in order to make his prayer all the more fervent. The Lord should once more regard Israel as His peculiar people, to consider and to treat them as His own. He wanted to make assurance doubly sure, for the sake of the Messianic promise. Such clinging trust should be found in the Christians at all times, for that is the power which vanquished even the Lord.

The Gracious Promise. — V. 10. **And He said, Behold, I make a covenant,** in the place of or in addition to that which had been broken by Israel's idolatry: **Before all the people, in their presence, in their sight, I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth nor in any nation,** namely, in bringing His people safely into the Land of Promise. **And all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee,** a thing which would strike fear and terror to the hearts of all enemies and adversaries, as the majesty of the mighty God would sweep them away. V. 11. **Observe thou** (Israel) **that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.** V. 12. **Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee.** All intimate alliances were absolutely forbidden at the outset, because the danger of introducing heathen abominations and thus repeating the offense of Mount Horeb was too great. V. 13. **But ye shall destroy their altars,** which were devoted to the worship of false gods, **break their images,** the statues or pillars erected in honor of their idols, **and cut down**

their groves, the pillarlike tree-trunks devoted to the service of Asherah or Astarte, whose voluptuous worship was found throughout Canaan. V. 14. **For thou shalt worship no other god**, idols to which the divine name was applied by the heathen; **for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God**, having revealed Himself as such in the recent transgression of the people; v. 15. **lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a-whoring after their gods**, idolatry being considered throughout Scriptures as spiritual adultery, **and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call, that is, invite, thee to the idolatrous feast, and thou eat of his sacrifice**; v. 16. **and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a-whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a-whoring after their gods**, the husbands being led into idolatry, into spiritual unfaithfulness, by their wives. V. 17. **Thou shalt make thee no molten gods**, idols cast out of any metal. While the participation in sacrificial meals of the heathen and intermarriages with heathen women only led to idolatry, the making of images was in itself a transgression of the First Commandment and a breaking of God's covenant. That is the distinct command of the Lord, that he who has forgiveness of sins should fear God and guard against backsliding, also by avoiding social intimacy with the godless world.

THE SECOND FESTIVALS. — V. 18. **The Feast of Unleavened Bread shalt thou keep.** Cp. chap. 23, 15. **Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib; for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.** Because of the defection of the Israelites the Lord here repeats the ordinances regarding the chief festival days and seasons. V. 19. **All that openeth the matrix is Mine**, all the firstborn sons of the children of Israel; **and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male.** This precept is here stated on account of its close connection with the Passover and its significance. V. 20. **But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb**, ransom by the payment of a lamb or a kid; **and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty.** Cp. chap. 23, 15. V. 21. **Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest**, cp. chap. 20, 9; 23, 12; **in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest**, these two seasons being mentioned since they were the busiest season for the farmer, when he would be inclined to use also the Sabbath for work. V. 22. **And thou shalt observe the Feast of Weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat harvest**, namely, Pentecost, **and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end**, the Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the season. V. 23. **Thrice in the year shall all your men-children**, all the males, the men, **appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.** On these three great festivals the attendance of all Israelites was commanded; they were obliged to meet, first at the Sanctuary, and later in the Temple. V. 24. **For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders**, cp. chap. 23, 31; **neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord, thy God, thrice in the year**; the Lord promised to keep away all enemies at these times, so that they would not take advantage of the men's absence to invade the country. V. 25. **Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice**, of the Passover lamb, **with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left unto the morning**; it should either be eaten to the last fragment, or the remainder burned with fire, chap. 12, 10. V. 26. **The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord, thy God**, this being the most prominent rite of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. **Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.** Cp. chap. 23, 19. V. 27. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words**, the ordinances were to be preserved in writing; **for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.** The first covenant had hereby been renewed or reinstituted. V. 28. **And he** (Moses) **was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights**, as he had been the first time, chap. 24, 18; **he did neither eat bread, nor drink water**, being miraculously sustained by the Lord. **And He** (God) **wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments**, the Decalog. The true hallowing of God's name in the New Testament consists in this, that we gladly hear and learn the Word of God, and help to uphold the ministry in our midst and to spread the Gospel-news.

THE SHINING FACE OF MOSES. — V. 29. **And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist** (knew) **not that the skin of his face shone while He** (God) **talked with him.** This wonderful brilliancy was caused by the vision of God on Mount Sinai. A reflection of the divine glory lingered in the face of Moses for some time after his return from the mountain. V. 30. **And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.** Even the reflection of the glory of the Lord is too much for sinners. V. 31. **And Moses called unto them**, encouraged first the leaders of the people to hear the precepts of the Lord; **and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto**

him. **And Moses talked with them.** V. 32. **And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh,** having been inspired with some measure of courage by the action of the rulers; **and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai,** all the people thus hearing Jehovah's precepts, with which He had again established the covenant. V. 33. **And till Moses had done speaking with them,** while he was laying the ordinances of the Lord before them, **he put a veil on his face.** V. 34. **But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him,** in the tent and afterwards in the Tabernacle, **he took the veil off until he came out. And he came out and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded;** he transmitted to them the Lord's commandments. V. 35. **And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone,** the splendor being renewed whenever Moses appeared before the Lord. **And Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.** This splendor of Moses' face symbolized the glory of the Mosaic office, 2 Cor. 3, 5 ff. Since the Law was the Word of God, it also had a glory. But the glory of the New Testament office, that of the Gospel, exceeds it in beauty. For the Law is the letter that killeth, but the Gospel is the spirit that maketh alive. And the glory of the Old Testament passed away, while the glory of the Gospel remains forever. All fear and terror is driven out of the heart by the comforting assurances of the Gospel, by its promises of life and salvation.

CHAPTER 35.

Preparations for Building the Tabernacle.

The Call for Voluntary Offerings. — V. 1. **And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together,** in a solemn assembly, **and said unto them, These are the words which the Lord hath commanded that ye should do them.** It was the formal, impressive statement of God's precept. V. 2. **Six days shall work be done.** These words contain not only a permission, but a command: the people were to be engaged in the labor of their calling during the week, and none to be found needlessly idle. Cp. 2 Thess. 3, 12. **But on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doeth work therein,** performs the labor of his station or calling, **shall be put to death.** The government of Israel being theocratic, under the immediate direction of the Lord, the rulers were charged to execute the Sabbath-breaker. V. 3. **Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath-day.** This ordinance made the Sabbath precept, chap. 20, 9—11; 31, 13—17, more severe, and prepared for the work connected with the building of the Tabernacle. V. 4. **And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying,** v. 5 **Take ye from among you an offering,** a gift presented to the Lord by willingly lifting up the hands containing the sacrifice, **unto the Lord; whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass,** copper or some of its standard alloys, v. 6. **and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen,** the expensive materials of hyacinth, purple, and crimson, and of white, shining byssus, to be used in the weaving of the sacred paraments, **and goats' hair,** of the long-haired Oriental goats, v. 7. **and rams' skins dyed red** (or tawny), **and badgers' skins,** those of the sea-cow of the Indian Ocean and its branches, **and shittim** (acacia) **wood,** v. 8. **and oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense,** chap. 30, 22—38, v. 9. **and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate.** This list includes all the materials which were used for the Tabernacle and its appointments. V. 10. **And every wise-hearted among you shall come and make all that the Lord hath commanded;** all the artistic talent among the children of Israel was pressed into service; v. 11. **the Tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches** (loops), **and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets,** v. 12. **the ark, and the staves** (carrying-poles) **thereof, with the mercy-seat, and the veil of the covering,** given this designation because it hid the ark with its mercy-seat from the eyes of all but the high priest, v. 13. **the table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the showbread,** v. 14. **the candlestick also for the light, and his furniture,** the instruments needed for keeping it in good order, **and his lamps, with the oil for the light,** v. 15. **and the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the Tabernacle,** at the eastern door, which led into the Holy Place, v. 16. **the altar of burnt offering, with his brazen grate,** chap. 27, 1—4, **his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,** v. 17. **the hangings of the court,** the curtains which formed its enclosure, **his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court,** made of the same materials as the Tabernacle curtains, v. 18. **the pins of the Tabernacle,** the pegs for holding the guy-ropes, **and the pins of the court, and**

their cords (ropes), v. 19. the cloths of service, to do service in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron, the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office. All these appointments, these various articles of equipment, had been ordered by the Lord, and were to be made in accordance with His will.

THE WILLING OFFERINGS. — V. 20. And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. They hurried from the meeting-place to their tents with a spontaneous, joyful willingness. V. 21. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, who felt lifted up, moved thereto, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. V. 22. And they came, both men and women, the women almost getting ahead of the men in the joyful, spirited rivalry, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, such as were worn on the fingers, and tablets, small golden globules which were worn in strings at the wrist or around the neck, all jewels of gold, ornaments of every kind; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord, whatever he had consecrated to the Lord by the gesture of weaving, or moving back and forth. V. 23. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins (cp. vv. 6. 7), brought them. V. 24. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the Lord's offering, he took or lifted his gift from his property and dedicated it for the service of the Lord; and every man with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. V. 25. And all the women that were wise-hearted, that had artistic talent, did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen (cp. v. 6). V. 26. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair for the outer covering of the Tabernacle. V. 27. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastplate; v. 28. and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. V. 29. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman whose heart made them willing, urged them on, to bring for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses. It was a scene altogether different from that which had taken place some two months before, when the people had been swayed by their idolatrous passions.

THE MASTER ARTISANS. — V. 30. And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; v. 31. and He hath filled him with the Spirit of God, his natural talent and love of the work being increased and intensified by the Lord Himself, in wisdom, to devise and plan ornaments, in understanding, to make the pattern applicable to the work in hand, and in knowledge, practical sense, and in all manner of workmanship, the various branches of the fine arts coming into consideration in the building of the Tabernacle and in the preparation of its appointments; v. 32. and to devise curious works, skilful designs, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, v. 33. and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work, that pertaining to every branch of art. V. 34. And He hath put in his heart that he may teach, God had given him the ability to instruct others, to give them directions for making the individual parts and vessels, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. V. 35. Them hath He filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning (skilful) workman, the artistic craftsman, and of the embroiderer, the weaver, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, one skilled both in weaving and in plaiting or braiding, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work; these two men ranked above all others in artistic ability combined with practical sense. It is a combination of gifts which has often been placed in the service of the Lord in times past and deserves to be cultivated to-day.

CHAPTER 36.

The Making of the Tabernacle.

THE GIFTS EXCEED THE NEEDS. — V. 1. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab and every wise-hearted man in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded. That was their calling, and in this calling they proved themselves willing. V. 2. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab and every wise-hearted man in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it, to offer his talents for the service of the Lord; v. 3. and they received of Moses all

the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the Sanctuary, to make it withal. That was the first great collection of gold, metals, and all other materials of which the artists stood in need for the work entrusted to them. **And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning.** The enthusiasm was no mere straw-fire, but it lasted in a steady glow. V. 4. **And all the wise men that wrought all the work of the Sanctuary,** the artists engaged in their labor of love, **came every man from his work which they made,** after they had carefully estimated the amount of material needed; v. 5. **and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make.** The material offered by the people was far in excess of the needs of the work. V. 6. **And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the Sanctuary.** Moses did not even wait to summon a meeting, but had a crier pass through the camp with a message restraining the eagerness of the people. **So the people were restrained from bringing.** V. 7. **For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much;** even with a lavish use of material there would be some remaining. The willingness of the children of Israel at this time is a shining example to the believers of the New Testament and a spur to many so-called Christians, who are very often unwilling to offer to the Lord even their surplus.

The Curtains of the Tabernacle. — V. 8. **And every wise-hearted man among them,** all the artists appointed to the work, **that wrought the work of the Tabernacle, made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; with cherubim of cunning work made he them,** the figures of the cherubim were skilfully woven into the cloth, as it was made on the loom with the four kinds of yarn, or thread, mentioned throughout the narrative. V. 9. **The length of one curtain** of the inner wall of the tent **was twenty and eight cubits and the breadth of one curtain four cubits;** the curtains were all of one size. V. 10. **And he coupled the five curtains one unto another; and the other five curtains he coupled one unto another,** the inner tent thus consisting of two large pieces, each twenty by twenty-eight cubits in size. V. 11. **And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvage in the coupling; likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second.** Cp. chap. 26. V. 12. **Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which was in the coupling of the second; the loops held one curtain to another.** V. 13. **And he made fifty taches of gold,** froglike clasps, **and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches; so it became one tabernacle,** a single tent-curtain for the inside covering. V. 14. **And he made curtains of goats' hair,** evidently woven from the hair as it was spun into threads, **for the tent over the Tabernacle; eleven curtains he made them.** V. 15. **The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain. The eleven curtains were of one size.** V. 16. **And he coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves.** The five and six strips, respectively, as sewed together, formed two pieces of unequal size, which formed the tent proper. V. 17. **And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second.** V. 18. **And he made fifty taches of brass,** clasps of copper or bronze, **to couple the tent together, that it might be one.** V. 19. **And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins above that.** Cp. chap. 26, 1—14. The leather coverings were intended to serve for a protection against the weather.[4])

The Framework and the Veils. — V. 20. **And he made boards** (planks) **for the Tabernacle of shittim wood, standing up,** strong and durable. V. 21. **The length of a board was ten cubits and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half.** V. 22. **One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another. Thus did he make for all the boards of the Tabernacle.** V. 23. **And he made boards for the Tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side southward;** v. 24. **and forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for his two tenons and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.** The tenons, fitting exactly in the sockets of the bases, held the planks upright. V. 25. **And for the other side of the Tabernacle, which is toward the north corner, he made twenty boards,** v. 26. **and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board and two sockets under another board.** V. 27. **And for the sides of the Tabernacle westward he made six boards,** of the regular width. V. 28. **And two boards made he for the corners of the Tabernacle in the two sides,** the planks on the northwest and southwest corners, respectively, being apparently only one half cubit in width, as they were dovetailed to the first planks on the north and the south side to form a solid corner. V. 29. **And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring.**

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4) On the manner of putting the curtains together, see Baehr, *Symbolik des mosaischen Kultus.*

Thus he did to both of them in both the corners. V. 30. And there were eight boards all told, on the west side; and their sockets were sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets. V. 31. And he made bars of shittim wood, cross-bars of acacia wood to lock the planks in place: five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle, v. 32. and five bars for the boards of the other side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the Tabernacle for the sides westward. V. 33. And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other, thus making the walls solid.5) V. 34. And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold. Cp. chap. 26, 15—30. V. 35. And he made a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; with cherubim made he it of cunning work, the four kinds of thread woven into a damask cloth with figures of cherubim. V. 36. And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim wood, for the entrance of the Most Holy Place, and overlaid them with gold; their hooks, to which the curtain was fastened, were of gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver, heavy bases to hold the pillars upright. V. 37. And he made an hanging for the Tabernacle door, the door leading to the Holy Place, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needlework, woven in geometrical figures. V. 38. And the five pillars of it with their hooks, from which this outer screen was suspended; and he overlaid their chapiters, their heads, or capitals, and their fillets, the rods connecting them, with gold; but their five sockets were of brass, of less costly metal than those of the inner curtain. Cp. chap. 26, 31—37. Thus the directions of the Lord, as given to Moses, were followed with the most painstaking exactness, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

5) Some scholars understand this to refer to the ridge-pole of the tent.

CHAPTER 37.

The Appointments of the Tabernacle.

THE ARK. — V. 1. And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood, the light, but strong wood of the Arabian acacia; two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it; v. 2. and he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown, a molding, of gold to it round about. V. 3. And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by (on or at) the four corners of it: even two rings upon the one side of it and two rings upon the other side of it. V. 4. And he made staves of shittim wood and overlaid them with gold. V. 5. And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark to bear the ark. V. 6. And he made the mercy-seat, the lid, or covering, of the ark, of pure gold; two cubits and a half was the length thereof and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. V. 7. And he made two cherubim of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, enchased and fashioned with a hammer, on the two ends of the mercy-seat: v. 8. one cherub on the end on this side and another cherub on the other end on that side, one at the north end, the other at the south end of the lid; out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubim on the two ends thereof, not merely set on top, but so firmly attached to the covering of the ark as to be an integral part of it. V. 9. And the cherubim spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces to another, even to the mercy-seatward were the faces of the cherubim; they were facing toward each other, and bending forward over the ark. Cp. chap. 25, 10—22.

THE TABLE OF THE SHOWBREAD. — V. 10. And he made the table of shittim wood; two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. V. 11. And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about, heavy cross-pieces connecting the legs of the table. V. 12. Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about, a heavy molding just beneath the edge of the plate; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about, a rim which stood up above the plate of the table. V. 13. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. V. 14. Over against the border were the rings, next to the heavy molding at the top, the places for the staves to bear the table. V. 15. And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. V. 16. And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes, the showbread plates, and his spoons, the small incense vessels, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, pitchers and goblets for the drink-offering, of pure gold. Cp. chap. 25, 23—30.

THE CANDLESTICK. — V. 17. And he made the candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work made he the candlestick, of chased workmanship; his shaft, the base, and his branch, the heavy upright holder, his bowls,

his knops, and his flowers, were of the same; v. 18. and six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof; v. 19. three bowls made after the fashion of almonds, shaped like the blossoms of the almond-tree, in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower; so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick. V. 20. And in the candlestick, in the shaft itself, were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers; v. 21. and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it, the knobs thus serving as ornaments at the branching of the arms. V. 22. Their knops and their branches were of the same; all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. V. 23. And he made his seven lamps, which were set into the bowls, and his snuffers and his snuff-dishes, the shears and pincers for trimming the wicks and the small plates for the trimmings, of pure gold. V. 24. Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof, their value, by a rough estimate, being some $30,000. Cp. chap. 25, 31—40.

The Altar of Incense. — V. 25. And he made the incense altar of shittim wood; the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. V. 26. And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top, the plate, of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it; also he made unto it a crown of gold round about, a heavy, decorated molding. V. 27. And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, next to the heavy molding, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal. Thus was the "golden altar" finished. V. 28. And he made the staves of shittim wood and overlaid them with gold. Cp. chap. 30, 1—10. V. 29. And he made the holy anointing oil and the pure incense of sweet spices according to the work of the apothecary. Cp. chap. 30, 22—28.

CHAPTER 38.

The Appointments of the Court.

The Altar of Burnt Offering. — V. 1. And he made the altar of burnt offering of shittim wood; five cubits was the length thereof and five cubits the breadth thereof (it was foursquare) and three cubits the height thereof. There is no top or plate mentioned, and it is probable that the hollow frame-work was filled with earth or stones whenever the altar was in position. V. 2. And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same, made of acacia wood; and he overlaid it with brass. V. 3. And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, bowls used for sprinkling and pouring the blood of the sacrifices, and the flesh-hooks, for spearing the meat in the caldrons, 1 Sam. 2, 13, and the fire-pans, for carrying the live coals used in kindling the fires; all the vessels thereof made he of brass, of copper or one of its alloys. V. 4. And he made for the altar a brazen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it. V. 5. And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, to be places for the staves. V. 6. And he made the staves of shittim wood and overlaid them with brass. V. 7. And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar to bear it withal. He made the altar hollow with boards. Cp. chap. 27, 1—8. V. 8. And he made the laver of brass and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation. These were women that served in the court of the Tabernacle, probably by washing and polishing the articles used in the sacred worship. They freely sacrificed their metal mirrors, otherwise thought indispensable pieces of furniture, for the Sanctuary of the Lord. The laver was a reservoir for the water used in the Sanctuary and in the court, and its base may have contained wash-basins for the prescribed ablutions. Cp. chap. 30, 17—21.

The Great Enclosure. — V. 9. And he made the court; on the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, curtains of byssus, an hundred cubits; v. 10. their pillars were twenty, and their brazen sockets twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. While the posts themselves were of bronze, the hooks and the connecting-rods from which the curtains were suspended were of silver. V. 11. And for the north side the hangings were an hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. V. 12. And for the west side, in the rear of the Tabernacle, were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. V. 13. And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. V. 14. The hangings of

the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. V. 15. And for the other side of the court gate, the large entrance to the sacred enclosure, on this hand and that hand, were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three and their sockets three. This section of the enclosure toward the east was just like the curtains on the north, south, and west sides. V. 16. All the hangings of the court round about were of fine twined linen. V. 17. And the sockets for the pillars, the bases, were of brass, the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters, the capitals of the posts only, of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver, their connecting-rods were made of silver. V. 18. And the hanging for the gate of the court was needlework, woven in geometrical figures like the screen before the Holy Place, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; and twenty cubits was the length of this curtain, for that was the width of the gate, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to, agreeing with, the hangings of the court. V. 19. And their pillars were four and their sockets of brass four; their hooks of silver and the overlaying of their chapiters and their fillets of silver. V. 20. And all the pins of the Tabernacle and of the court round about were of brass, the pegs for holding the guy-ropes. Cp. chap. 27, 9—19.

THE SUMMARY OF GOLD, SILVER, AND BRASS. V. 21. This is the sum of the Tabernacle, even of the Tabernacle of Testimony, as it was counted, the enumeration, the summary of the mustered things, the appointments of the Sanctuary, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron, the priest. The duty of counting the amount of metal used was committed to the Levites under the direction of Ithamar. V. 22. And Bezaleel, as the master artisan, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the Lord commanded Moses. V. 23. And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning (skilful) workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen, an artist in all the various crafts that came into consideration. V. 24. All the gold that was occupied (employed, made use of) for the work in all the work of the Holy Place, even the gold of the offering, the gifts which the people brought voluntarily, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, that is, standard weight. This was 87,730 shekels in gold, or more than $600,000, accepting the lowest estimate, according to which a gold shekel was worth $7.20. If its value is taken at 9.60, as some scholars do, the value of the gold used in preparing the Tabernacle was almost $850,000. V. 25. And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; v. 26. a bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. So the standard which was afterward fixed served as a guide in estimating the value of the voluntary contributions, the total amount being 301,775 shekels of silver, or almost $200,000. V. 27. And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the Sanctuary and the sockets of the veil and hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket, that is, almost 118 pounds Troy. V. 28. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. V. 29. And the brass of the offering was seventy talents and two thousand and four hundred shekels. V. 30. And therewith he made, that is, he made out of the copper which was offered or out of its alloy, bronze, the sockets to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, the pillars of the entrance to the Holy Place having bronze bases, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, v. 31. and the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the Tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about. The example of the children of Israel in sacrificing for their Sanctuary may well inspire enthusiasm of the right kind in the hearts of the believers of the New Testament, making them willing to contribute for the building and the spreading of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 39.

The Priestly Vestments.

THE EPHOD AND ITS GIRDLE. — V. 1. And of the blue and purple and scarlet, the fine woven fabrics which they had made, they made cloths of service, to do service in the Holy Place, and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the Lord commanded Moses. This included all the vestments and paraments in use in the Tabernacle. V. 2. And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and

scarlet, and fine twined linen, the fine, damasklike cloth being interwoven with threads of gold. V. 3. And they did beat the gold into thin plates, gold, being highly malleable, yielding readily to this treatment, and cut it into wires, thin threads, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen with cunning work. V. 4. They made shoulder-pieces for it to couple it together; by the two edges was it coupled together, the effect being that of a stole, or vest. V. 5. And the curious girdle of his ephod, that was upon it, was of the same, according to the work thereof, of the same material and workmanship; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, as the Lord commanded Moses. V. 6. And they wrought onyx stones, cut and polished them, inclosed in ouches of gold, that is, in settings which were continued as clasps, or buckles, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. V. 7. And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel, to keep their names in remembrance before the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses. Cp. chap. 28, 6—12.

The Breastplate and Its Fastenings. — V. 8. And he made the breastplate of cunning work, a production of the highest artistic skill, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. V. 9. It was foursquare, half a cubit either way; they made the breastplate double, the material forming a sort of pocket; a span was the length thereof and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled. V. 10. And they set in it four rows of stones, precious gems. The first row was a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle; this was the first row. V. 11. And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. V. 12. And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. V. 13. And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they were enclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings, in the settings by which they were fastened to the cloth. V. 14. And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. V. 15. And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold, braided of gold wire. V. 16. And they made two ouches of gold, the settings continued in the form of clasps, or buckles, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate. V. 17. And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. V. 18. And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, in the clasps connected with the two onyx stones on the shoulders, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, before it. V. 19. And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward, on the lower end inside, facing the ephod. V. 20. And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, on the ephod, in front, beneath the breastplate, toward the forepart of it, over against the other coupling thereof, where it was held together, above the curious girdle of the ephod. V. 21. And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, with threads made of the hyacinth-colored material, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod, as the Lord commanded Moses. Cp. chap. 28, 15—29.

The Other Articles of Wear. — V. 22. And he made the robe of the ephod, over which the ephod was worn, of woven work, all of blue, a hyacinth-colored garment reaching to the knees. V. 23. And there was an hole in the midst of the robe, for the head to pass through, as the hole of an habergeon, a strong linen shirt worn by soldiers, with a band, a strong hem, or selvage, round about the hole, that it should not rend. V. 24. And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen; these were on the skirt of the garment, at the knees. V. 25. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates; v. 26. a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in, as the Lord commanded Moses. Cp. chap. 28, 31—34. V. 27. And they made coats of fine linen, of shining byssus, of woven work for Aaron and for his sons, v. 28. and a miter of fine linen, the high, turbanlike headdress, and goodly bonnets, ornamented caps, of fine linen, for the ordinary priests, and linen breeches of fine twined linen, v. 29. and a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework, of a damasklike fabric prepared from the various costly materials, as the Lord commanded Moses. The girdle of Aaron only is mentioned, since the girdles of the ordinary priests were patterned after his. V. 30. And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, a crown, or diadem, of holiness, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. V. 31. And they tied unto it a lace of blue, a hyacinth-colored, ornamental string, to fasten it on high upon the miter, as the Lord commanded Moses. Cp. chap. 28, 39—42.

MOSES APPROVES THE WORK. — V. 32. **Thus was all the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of the Congregation finished; and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they.** V. 33. **And they brought the Tabernacle unto Moses,** both the inner and the outer covering, the fine damask being intended for the inner wall, and the curtains woven of goat-hair for the outside, **the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets,** v. 34. **and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins,** the tough and pliant seacow leather, which served to shelter the tent, something on the order of a fly-top in our days, **and the veil of the covering,** the curtain for the door of the Most Holy Place, v. 35. **the Ark of the Testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat,** v. 36. **the table, and all the vessels thereof, and the showbread,** v. 37. **the pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order,** the burners as they were regularly to be renewed by trimming and filling the lamps, **and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light,** v. 38. **and the golden altar of incense, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense,** literally, the incense of sweef odor, **and the hanging for the Tabernacle door,** v. 39. **the brazen altar and his grate of brass, his staves and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,** v. 40. **the hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the Tabernacle for the Tent of the Congregation,** the various articles being enumerated in the order of their importance, v. 41. **the cloths of service to do service in the Holy Place, and the holy garments for Aaron, the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office.** V. 42. **According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work,** the majority of them by donating the materials, and the artisans by producing the articles. V. 43. **And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it;** a careful inspection showed that the instructions of the Lord had been carried out in every detail. **And Moses blessed them.** "The readiness with which the people had brought in abundance the requisite gifts for this work, and the zeal with which they had accomplished the work in half a year or less, were delightful signs of Israel's willingness to serve the Lord; and for this the blessing of God could not fail to be given." (Keil.)

CHAPTER 40.

The Erection and the Dedication of the Tabernacle.

THE TABERNACLE SET UP. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** saying, v. 2. **On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the Tabernacle of the Tent of the Congregation.** This was on the first of Nisan, or Abib, at the beginning of the second year after the children of Israel had left Egypt. The Tabernacle was to be in readiness for the first anniversary of the Passover Festival. V. 3. **And thou shalt put therein the Ark of the Testimony,** where the Decalog, the testimony of the Lord to the people, was deposited, **and cover the ark with the veil,** hide it from the eyes of the people by the heavy curtain which screened the Most Holy Place. V. 4. **And thou shalt bring in the table of showbread, and set in order the things,** literally, arrange the order, **that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.** V. 5. **And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the Ark of the Testimony,** that is, to the east of it, before the veil of the Sanctuary, **and put the hanging of the door to the Tabernacle,** the door-curtain before the Holy Place. V. 6. **And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the Tabernacle of the Tent of the Congregation,** out in the open court. V. 7. **And thou shalt set the laver between the Tent of the Congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein,** since it was to serve for the ablutions of the priests, both before entering the Sanctuary and before going up to the altar of burnt offering. V. 8. **And thou shalt set up the court round about,** both the posts and the curtains, **and hang up the hanging at the court gate,** the splendid variegated entrance curtain. V. 9. **And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the Tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it and all the vessels thereof; and it shall be holy,** set aside for the worship of Jehovah. V. 10. **And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar for the service of the Lord; and it shall be an altar most holy,** literally, holiness of holiness, everybody and everything that touched it being thereby consecrated to the Lord. V. 11. **And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot and sanctify it,** set it apart for the sacred use for which it was intended. V. 12. **And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and wash them with water,** chap. 29, 4. V. 13. **And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him,**

and sanctify him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. V. 14. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats, the white byssus garments which were the distinctive dress of the ordinary priests; v. 15. and thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. The priesthood was hereditary among the sons of Aaron, but their consecration did not take place until the special ordinances of the sacrifices had been given. Cp. Lev. 8. V. 16. Thus did Moses; according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he.

The Various Appointments in Place. — V. 17. And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the Tabernacle was reared up, the great tent of worship was solemnly erected. V. 18. And Moses reared up the Tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, the bases of the large planks, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars, those from which the two curtains were suspended. V. 19. And he spread abroad the tent over the Tabernacle, first the splendid variegated curtain, and then the curtain of goats' hair, and put the covering of the tent above upon it, the protective covering of rams' skins and seacow leather, as the Lord commanded Moses. V. 20. And he took and put the testimony into the ark, the stone tables with the Decalog, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. V. 21. And he brought the ark into the Tabernacle, into the Most Holy Place, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the Ark of the Testimony, shut it off from the gaze of all but the high priest on the great Day of Atonement, as the Lord commanded Moses. V. 22. And he put the table of showbread in the Tent of the Congregation, in the Holy Place, upon the side of the Tabernacle northward, without the veil, on the right, or north, side of the altar of incense. V. 23. And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord, he arranged the showbread in the two heaps according to orders, as the Lord had commanded Moses. V. 24. And he put the candlestick in the Tent of the Congregation over against the table, on the side opposite the table of showbread, on the side of the Tabernacle southward, to the left of the altar of incense. V. 25. And he lighted the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses. V. 26. And he put the golden altar of incense in the Tent of the Congregation, the Holy Place, before the veil; v. 27. and he burned sweet incense thereon, as the Lord commanded Moses. V. 28. And he set up the hanging at the door of the Tabernacle, suspending it from the pillars at the eastern entrance. V. 29. And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the Tabernacle of the Tent of the Congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat-offering, as the Lord commanded Moses. Both the burning of incense and the bringing of sacrifices at this time were extraordinary acts of Moses, and did not belong to the ordinary worship of the people, as it was done after the consecration of the Sanctuary. V. 30. And he set the laver between the Tent of the Congregation and the altar, and put water there to wash withal. V. 31. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat; v. 32. when they went into the Tent of the Congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed, as the Lord commanded Moses. This signified that the Lord wanted not only clean hands, but clean hearts as well, in all those that were and are engaged in His worship. V. 33. And he reared up the court round about the Tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

The Cloud of God's Glory. — V. 34. Then a cloud covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, shut off from the gaze of sinful men by the screen of cloud. So Jehovah Himself consecrated the Sanctuary by this manifestation of His glory in the sacred cloud, even before it was consecrated by the priesthood. V. 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the Tent of the Congregation, not even he, the friend of Jehovah, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. This shows that the people had now again received the full pardon of the Lord, since He once more dwelt in their midst with His gracious presence. V. 36. And when the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; v. 37. but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. The people broke camp and moved onward only with the moving of the cloud. V. 38. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the Tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight, before the eyes, of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. Thus did the presence of the covenant God accompany them in all their journeyings, and the Tabernacle served to hold before the congregation the object of its calling and the certain fulfilment of the promises to the patriarchs.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

INTRODUCTION.

The third book of Moses received the name which we now apply to it because its precepts are concerned chiefly with the duties of the Levites and priests. It contains detailed ordinances describing the Levitic worship as it was to be observed in the Tabernacle and afterward in the Temple. The laws in Leviticus, mainly of a ceremonial character, constitute a handbook for the use of the priests in the performance of the various duties entrusted to them. A few supplementary rules to this Levitic law were added in the Book of Numbers.

Although this book contains no direct Messianic promise whatever, it is, by the intention of God, in reality one continuous sermon on the salvation of Jesus Christ; for, as the New Testament shows conclusively, the entire magnificent system of sacrifices was nothing less than a typical representation of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was foreshadowed by every bloody offering on the sacred altars. And as far as the children of Israel were concerned, the laws of sacrifices taught them that God is holy, and that man is sinful; that all are guilty before His Law; that the man who transgresses His Law is worthy of His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation; that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin; that the holy God desires to enter into fellowship with sinful man, and approaches him, and appoints this way of sacrifice as an atonement for sin, and through His mercy accepts the sacrifice of the victim instead of the death of the sinner. Incidentally, it must be kept in mind throughout the book that the whole system of sacrifices was merely temporary and typical. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," Heb. 10, 4. No animal, no mere man, no angel, could atone for sin. God alone could do that, and therefore He became man that He might be able to suffer and die for sin as man's substitute. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," 2 Cor. 5, 19. All sacrifices looked forward, therefore, to Christ, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, and on which God laid the iniquity of us all. The usages of the Jewish cult were a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ, Col. 2, 17.

"The Book of Genesis shows man's ruin and fall. Exodus pictures the great redemption and salvation which God has provided. Leviticus follows naturally, and is mainly occupied with the way of access to God in worship and communion. It is a book for a redeemed people. Its teaching in the light of the New Testament is for those who have realized their lost condition, and have accepted the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and are seeking to draw near into the presence of God. It shows the holiness of God and the utter impossibility of access except on the ground of atonement. Such is the main lesson of Leviticus, and it is impressed upon us over and over again in a variety of ways. We come face to face with the great question of sacrifice for sin. The stress laid upon sacrifice is, no doubt, intended to give man a shock with regard to sin. The book stands out for all time as God's estimate of sin. To understand the seriousness of sin we must fathom three oceans — the ocean of human suffering, the ocean of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ocean of future suffering which awaits the impenitent sinners. What we have in type in Leviticus we have in reality in the cross of Christ. The cross was indeed an exhibition of God's love, the love of God the Father, and of God the Son, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself. But it was more than this — it was God's estimate of sin. The cross of Christ stands as God's estimate of what sin really is, something so deep and dreadful that it cost *that*. It was more even than this, it was the atoning sacrifice by which sin could forever be put away." 1)

The Book of Leviticus may be divided into three parts: the precepts concerning the sacrifices and the priesthood; the consecration of Israel for the service of Jehovah by the cleansing of the bodily life; the holiness of Israel as the people of God in life and worship.2)

1) *Concordia Bible Class*, Feb., 1919, 21—23.
2) Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 25.

CHAPTER 1.

The Burnt Offerings.

OF THE HERD. — V. 1. **And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** out of the midst of the cloud which enveloped His glory, Ex. 40, 35, **saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock.** The sacrifices brought by individuals are described first, voluntary offerings, through which the worshiper intended to draw near to the Lord. The Hebrew word indicates the fact that sinful man, as such, does not dare to draw near to Jehovah. The sacrifice, therefore, is a sym-

bol of his desire to enter into fellowship with Jehovah, and its value consisted in its foreshadowing the greater Sacrifice, through whom we have peace and access to the Father. The voluntary offering was regarded as a gift of the worshiper, no matter whether it was an actual sacrifice or a dedicatory offering. When the individual Israelite had determined to bring such a gift, the Lord's instructions as to the selection of the animal and as to the manner of offering were inclusive and exact. V. 3. **If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish,** a strong, healthy animal, with all its limbs and members intact; **he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation before the Lord.** The formal dedication of the sacrifice to the Lord took place at the great entrance of the court, or perhaps inside the court itself, where the altar of burnt offering stood. At a later period such a perfect system of offering sacrifices was put into operation that both the slaughtering of the animals and their dissecting was performed with the greatest possible speed, a row of pillars holding heavy beams with hooks being used to suspend the animals after their blood had been caught by the officiating priests. V. 4. **And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering,** in token of the transfer of his sin to the animal as his substitute, as the victim destined to die in the worshiper's stead; **and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him,** that his sins might be covered over before the face of the Lord. Note that here, as always, the acceptance of a substitute is in itself an act of grace and mercy on the part of the Lord. V. 5. **And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord,** each worshiper, in a case of this kind, performing the function of a priest of the Lord, as a member of the kingdom of priests, Ex. 19, 6. **And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood,** as it was caught up in basins after the slaughter of the animal, **and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar,** against its four sides, **that is by the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** The last was an exclusive priestly function, and even the catching of the blood was performed by the Levites only in cases of emergency. V. 6. **And he shall flay the burnt offering,** this part of the work being done either by the offerer or by a Levite, **and cut it into his pieces,** dissect it according to the rule concerning the disposition of the various parts. V. 7. **And the sons of Aaron, the priest, shall put fire upon the altar** of burnt offering, **and lay the wood in order upon the fire,** which was always kept burning; v. 8. **and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head and the fat,** chiefly the loose fat of the abdominal and thoracic cavities, **in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar;** v. 9. **but his inwards and his legs,** the intestines, as the lower viscera, and the lower parts of the legs, especially beneath the knees, **shall he wash in water,** to remove any outward impurities that might be clinging to them; **and the priests shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.** The animal, with its flesh and bones, was burned entire, for the offering signified that the worshiper dedicated himself to the Lord with all his heart and mind, with all the powers of his body and soul, and the rising of the smoke, as the animal was consumed, caused its essence to ascend as a pleasant, acceptable odor to the Lord. In other words, the Lord graciously accepted the worshiper and his service as a member of His Church on earth. God was well pleased with such sacrifices, if they were offered in faith.

OF THE FLOCK. — V. 10. **And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice,** the worshiper being too poor to afford a bullock, **he shall bring it a male without blemish,** a perfect animal in every respect. V. 11. **And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward,** the usual place for slaughtering sacrifices, **before the Lord.** The various parts of the court were soon used for special purposes, its eastern end being used for the ashes of the altar, and the place south and southwest of the great altar being devoted to the priests. On the south side of the altar was also the incline for the officiating priests. **And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar,** in the act symbolizing the atonement of sins. V. 12. **And he shall cut it into his pieces,** as the disposition of the parts required, **with his head and his fat,** these parts being severed from the carcass; **and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar.** V. 13. **But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water,** as in the case of the bullock. **And the priest shall bring it all and burn it upon the altar; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.**

OF FOWLS. — V. 14. **And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the Lord be of fowls,** in the case of very poor people, **then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves or of young pigeons,** either the wild or the tame species being acceptable for a gift-offering. V. 15. **And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head,** separate his head from his body by pinching, **and burn it on the altar,** toss the head into the fire; **and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar,** since there was hardly enough to be sprinkled or poured. V. 16. **And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers,** either the crop with the entire in-

testinal tract and its filth, or the entire intestinal tract while the dove was unplucked, **and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes,** where all the refuse was heaped up. V. 17. **And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof,** split it open lengthwise, or make an incision at its wings, **but shall not divide it asunder; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.** The sacrifice of the poor was just as acceptable to the Lord as the more costly sacrifice of the rich.

The sacrificial worship was a shadow of things to come, in the person of the Messiah. In anticipation of the perfect sacrifice of Christ God accepted these figurative offerings as atonements for sin. But Christ is the only true Sacrifice, who bore the sins of all men in His body on the tree, burning under the wrath of the just God and dying as the Substitute for all men. In view of this sacrifice, whose blessings are ours through faith, we Christians are bound to offer ourselves to the Lord in daily obedience and service. Such sacrifice is a sweet savor to the Lord, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, Rom. 12, 1. 2.

CHAPTER 2.

The Meat-Offerings.

THE VARIOUS KINDS OF MEAT-OFFERINGS. — V. 1. **And when any will offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour.** This also was an oblation, or gift, brought near to the Lord with the purpose of establishing true fellowship, and could be made by any member of the congregation, no matter whether man or woman. Only the finest wheat-flour was to be used in these oblations. **And he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon.** The incense was not mixed with the flour and the olive-oil, but added in such a manner as to permit its entire removal from the vessel in which it was offered. V. 2. **And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests; and he** (the officiating priest) **shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof and of the oil thereof with all the frankincense thereof,** as much as the hand would hold of flour and oil; **and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar,** to cause Jehovah to remember the worshiper in His mercy, **to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord,** well-pleasing and acceptable to the Lord, as the burnt offering had been, chap. 1, 9. 13. 17. V. 3. **And the remnant of the meat-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons;** all of it was offered to the Lord, who, in turn, bestowed the bulk of it upon the priests as a part of the emoluments due them; **it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire.** This is said of all sacrificial gifts which were wholly devoted to God, but of which portions were hallowed to Him by being given to the priests. These gifts the priests used for food in a place in the court of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, near the altar of burnt offering, chap. 6, 26; 10, 12. V. 4. **And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering baken in the oven,** a small portable earthen oven in the form of a pot or jar, **it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour, mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers, anointed with oil.** The unleavened dough used in making these cakes was mixed with olive-oil, and the thick, biscuitlike cakes were pierced with holes. V. 5. **And if thy oblation be a meat-offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil,** the only difference between this sacrifice and the preceding one being this, that it was fried in an open pan. V. 6. **Thou shalt part it in pieces and pour oil thereon; it is a meat-offering.** The finished cakes were to be broken into small fragments and then saturated with olive-oil. V. 7. **And if thy oblation be a meat-offering baken in the frying-pan,** boiled in a pot, **it shall be made of fine flour with oil,** apparently cooked in the oil. The olive-oil, which figures so prominently in these sacrifices, is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. The good works of the believers are done in the power of the Holy Ghost. If these sacrifices are accompanied with the incense of prayer, they will be well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord. V. 8. **And thou shalt bring the meat-offering that is made of these things unto the Lord; and when it is presented unto the priest,** as the representative of God, **he shall bring it unto the altar.** V. 9. **And the priest shall take from the meat-offering a memorial thereof,** to bring the worshiper in remembrance before God, **and shall burn it upon the altar; it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.** V. 10. **And that which is left of the meat-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire.** The men that served in the Sanctuary were to receive their sustenance from these gifts, just as to-day they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. V. 11. **No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven,** leaven being considered an impure addition in this case on account of its fermenting property; **for ye shall burn no leaven nor any honey,** against which the same objection was made as against the leaven, **in any offering of the Lord made by fire.**

There were certain offerings in which leavened bread was included, chap. 7, 13. 14; 23, 17. 20, and also honey, 2 Chron. 31, 5; but in the meat-offering they were strictly forbidden. Thus the believers will avoid all impurity and hypocrisy in word and deed.

THE MEAT-OFFERING OF THE FIRST-FRUITS. — V. 12. **As for the oblation of the first-fruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord,** bring them as gifts in order to establish or to confirm the fellowship with the Lord; **but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet savor.** In such offerings, therefore, even leaven and honey might be included. V. 13. **And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt,** this being both a purifier and a preservative; **neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.** Cp. Mark 9, 49; Col. 4, 6. This rule applied not only to meat-offerings, but to all offerings commanded by God. V. 14. **And if thou offer a meat-offering of thy first-fruits unto the Lord,** of the first grain that was ready to be harvested in the early summer, **thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first-fruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.** The stalks of the grain were cut with the maturing ears, and the grain roasted at the fire while in the ear, such dried or roasted kernels, in the form of groats, being a favorite dish in the Orient to this day. V. 15. **And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon,** as in the case of the fine flour; **it is a meat-offering.** V. 16. **And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** It is undoubtedly well-pleasing to the Lord if we, in addition to the regular sacrifices in good works, are found willing to offer to Him in extraordinary quantities, if He has blessed us in unusual measure.

CHAPTER 3.

The Peace-Offerings.

OF THE HERD. — V. 1. **And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace-offering, if he offer it of the herd, whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord.** The designation "peace-offering" seems to have been the more general term, for these sacrifices included also the thank-offerings and the salvation-offerings. Another division is that into thanksgiving-, vow-, and free-will offerings, chap. 7, 11—18. Some peace-offerings were made in times of distress, the idea associated with them being that of supplication for divine help, Judg. 20, 26; 21, 4; 1 Sam. 13, 9; 2 Sam. 14, 25. V. 2. **And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering,** in the act which declared the animal to be the substitute for the worshiper in the sacrifice, **and kill it at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about,** for the purpose of atonement. V. 3. **And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** certain parts of the animal offered for the purpose of establishing a closer fellowship with God were to be burned on the altar of burnt offering; **the fat that covereth the inwards,** the large net of adipose membrane in the abdominal cavity, **and all the fat that is upon the inwards,** that which is only loosely attached to the intestines and may be peeled off without difficulty, v. 4. **and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks,** attached to the muscles in the upper pelvic cavity, **and the caul above the liver,** the small net of adipose membrane extending from the liver to the kidneys, **with the kidneys,** that is, together with, or upon, the kidneys, as they lay in position, **it shall he take away** from the rest of the animal. V. 5. **And Aaron's sons shall burn it,** these fatty parts with the kidneys, **on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord,** well-pleasing to Him if made in the right manner, if brought in true faith. These offerings were brought upon, that is, after the burnt offerings of the day.

OF THE FLOCK. — V. 6. **And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offering unto the Lord be of the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish.** The sex was immaterial, but the animal had to be perfect, as before. V. 7. **If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the Lord,** for the purpose of securing the good pleasure of the Lord. V. 8. **And he** (the worshiper) **shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** out in the open court; **and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar,** the act having the same significance as before. V. 9. **And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** that portion of the sacrificial victim burned upon the altar being known as the food of Jehovah and signifying the communion between Him and the worshiper brought about by the sacrifice; **the fat thereof and**

the whole rump, the heavy fat-tail which is characteristic of a certain variety of sheep in Arabia and Palestine, **it shall he take off hard by the backbone; and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards,** as in the case of the larger animal, v. 3, v. 10. **and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys,** that is, upon the kidneys, **it shall he take away.** Cp. v. 4. V. 11. **And the priest shall burn it upon the altar; it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord,** a food offered by the believing Israelite by fire and rising up to the Lord in an odor well-pleasing to Him. In this manner the Lord partook of the sacrifice and entered into fellowship with His people.

OF GOATS. — V. 12. **And if his offering be a goat, then he shall offer it before the Lord.** V. 13. **And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof,** as it was caught when the animal was slaughtered, **upon the altar round about.** V. 14. **And he shall offer thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards,** v. 15. **and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.** V. 16. **And the priest shall burn them upon the altar; it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor; all the fat is the Lord's,** that is, all the loose fatty parts that were enumerated in these three cases were to be the Lord's portion. V. 17. **It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings that ye eat neither fat nor blood.** As long as the children of Israel were in the wilderness, all the animals slaughtered for food had to be brought to the Sanctuary, chap. 17, 3—7; in the land of Canaan, they were permitted to slaughter such animals in their own cities, Deut. 12, 15, but all the sacrifices had to be made at the place of the Sanctuary. The prohibition, however, concerning the loose fat mentioned in this chapter and that regarding blood remained in force for the Jewish people. In the case of all peace-offerings the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder belonged to the priests, chap. 7, 30 ff., and the rest of the meat was to be eaten by the worshiper and his family in the court of the Tabernacle. This joyous sacrificial meal was to express the happiness which the believers felt because of their covenant with the God of their salvation, just as we Christians enjoy the blessings of God's covenant in the Sacrament of the Altar.

CHAPTER 4.

The Sin-Offerings.

FOR A PRIEST. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance,** in an unintentional offense, **against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them;** (the sacrifices enumerated till now were free-will offerings and could be brought even when there was no specific occasion, whenever the heart of the individual prompted him to seek the Lord's fellowship in sacrifice, prayer, and sacrificial meal; but there were times and occasions when certain sacrifices had to be made, as when an unintentional trespass had occurred. This included all sins of weakness, not only such as had been committed in ignorance, haste, and negligence, but also such in which the weakness of the flesh had overcome the good intention of the believer); v. 3. **if the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people,** the reference here very probably being to the high priest, who was in a special sense the anointed of the Lord among the priests; if this high priest in his official capacity, as the representative of the people, should become guilty of such an unintentional sin, **then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin-offering,** the most conspicuous sacrificial animal because of the priest's high position. V. 4. **And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** where all the sacrificial animals were officially delivered, **before the Lord, and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head,** in the gesture signifying the transmission of his own guilt upon the substitute victim, **and kill the bullock before the Lord,** the animal taking the place of the guilty man. V. 5. **And the priest that is anointed,** the high priest, **shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** into the Holy Place; v. 6. **and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the Sanctuary,** the heavy curtain that screened the ark in the Most Holy Place. V. 7. **And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the horns of the golden altar being used only in this case and when the entire nation was concerned, since the offense was considered especially grave; **and shall pour all the blood of the**

bullock, the great bulk of it, but little having been used for the ceremonies of the Holy Place, **at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** out in the open court. The sacrificial blood, which was to expiate the sin, was thus placed very prominently before the eyes of the Lord, in order to plead for His forgiveness. V. 8. **And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin-offering; the fat that covereth the inwards,** the large net of adipose membrane in the abdominal cavity, **and all the fat that is upon the inwards,** the loose fat along the intestines, v. 9. **and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks,** attached to the muscles of the upper pelvic region, **and the caul above the liver,** the small net of adipose membrane which extends from the liver to the kidneys, **with the kidneys, it shall he take away,** v. 10. **as it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace-offerings,** chap. 3, 3. 4; **and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering.** V. 11. **And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung,** v. 12. **even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out** when they were carried out from time to time out of the court of the Tabernacle, **and burn him on the wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out shall he be burned.** This complete removal of the sacrifice of sin-offering signified that the sin for which it was brought was now put away entirely, and the whole ceremony was intended to express the fact that the fellowship with God, which had been disturbed or severed by the sinful act, was now once more restored to its original integrity.

FOR THE WHOLE CONGREGATION. — V. 13. **And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance,** that is, through inadvertence due either to unconsciousness of the act's sinfulness or to lack of information on certain points of the Law, **and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat** (something) **against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty,** although, for the time being, still in ignorance of that fact; v. 14. **when the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation,** as a body, **shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** V. 15. **And the elders of the congregation,** as the representatives of the entire people, **shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord,** both in confessing the sin and expressing the transfer of the sin to the sacrificial animal; **and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord.** V. 16. **And the priest that is anointed,** the high priest, **shall bring of the bullock's blood,** which was caught up as usual, **to the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** to the Holy Place; v. 17. **and the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, even before the veil,** behind which was the throne of the Lord, the mercy-seat of the ark. V. 18. **And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the Lord, that is in the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the golden altar of incense, **and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** V. 19. **And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar.** V. 20. **And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin-offering,** that offered by the high priest, **so shall he do with this; and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.** V. 21. **And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp and burn him as he burned the first bullock; it is a sin-offering for the congregation.** The high priest here acted as the mediator of the people, and the meaning of the entire ceremony was this, that the sin was covered, put out of sight, not, of course, as if the wrong could be undone, but that God had so hidden it as to have the sinner stand in His presence without fault. The sin-offering, in this case especially, was a symbol of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as He gave Himself for the sins of the whole world, and of the atonement which He gained by it. At the same time we Christians must not lose sight of the fact that, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, Heb. 10, 26.

FOR A RULER. — V. 22. **When a ruler,** one of the princes of the people, **hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord, his God, concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty;** v. 23. **or if his sin wherein he hath sinned come to his knowledge,** if some one point out to him his deviation from the exact line of God's will, **he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish,** a sacrifice which later, Num. 15, 24, is enumerated with that of the whole congregation; v. 24. **and he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat,** as the substitute victim, **and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord; it is a sin-offering.** V. 25. **And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.** In this case the ceremonies of sprinkling before

the veil of the Most Holy Place and of smearing the blood on the horns of the golden altar of incense were omitted. V. 26. **And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offerings,** chap. 3, 5; **and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.** The ordinance concerning the disposition of the flesh is given chap. 6, 26—29.

FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE. — V. 27. **And if any one of the common people,** any person, man or woman, native Jew or sojourning foreigner, Num. 15, **sin through ignorance,** in the same inadvertent manner as in the cases considered till now, **while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty;** v. 28. **or if his sin which he hath sinned come to his knowledge,** if some one informs him of the wrong which he has committed, **then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats,** the shaggy variety being specified here, as above, **a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned,** to make atonement for him. V. 29. **And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt offering,** on the north side of the large altar in the court. V. 30. **And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.** V. 31. **And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offerings,** the same loose pieces of fat from the various parts of the abdominal cavity; **and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the Lord; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him,** the Lord accepting the sacrifice in mercy, as an offering of propitiation. V. 32. **And if he bring a lamb for a sin-offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish;** this was the alternative for a sacrificial animal. V. 33. **And he** (the worshiper) **shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay it for a sin-offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.** V. 34. **And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar;** v. 35. **and he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace-offerings,** chap. 3, 9. 10; **and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, of burnt offering, according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord; and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.** Thus the Lord in mercy provided a way for the believers of the Old Testament by which, although in a symbolical manner, they received the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins, the blood of their sacrifices foreshadowing the greater, the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who has found an eternal redemption for us.

CHAPTER 5.

Of Sin- and Trespass-Offerings.

SPECIAL CASES OF SIN-OFFERINGS. — V. 1. **And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.** This is the first of several special cases in which a sin-offering was commanded. In the Jewish forms of trial the judge adjured those present, those summoned for that purpose, to tell the whole truth concerning the case, as they knew it, whether their knowledge was that of eye-witnesses or had been derived from other reliable sources. To feign ignorance at such a time and not to perform one's duty as required of witnesses made a person guilty before God, and unless this guilt was removed, the person in question had to suffer the consequences. Among these are mentioned sickness, childlessness, and even total extirpation of the family. V. 2. **Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast,** of some wild animal, **or a carcass of unclean cattle,** of domestic animals, **or the carcass of unclean creeping things,** of reptiles, **and if it be hidden from him, if he is not aware of it at the time, he also shall be unclean and guilty.** V. 3. **Or if he touch the uncleanness of man,** anything which caused a man to be ceremonially unclean, **whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it,** that is, when he finds out about the defilement and yet omits the simple forms of purification which were provided in such cases, chap. 11, 24—40; 15, 5. 8. 21; Num. 19, 22, **then he shall be guilty,** atonement should be made for the sin which he committed, for the guilt which he heaped upon himself. V. 4. **Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him;** this is said of oaths as they are often made in trivial, foolish, unimportant matters, in heedlessness, recklessness, or passion, the person afterward forgetting or neglecting to keep the solemn promises and lightly disregarding the fact that

such playing with sacred matters is sinful; when he knoweth of it, when it is brought to his attention and he does nothing to remove the sin, **then he shall be guilty in one of these,** in one of the three cases here enumerated. V. 5. **And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing,** acknowledge the particular fault concerned before presenting the sacrificial animal. V. 6. **And he shall bring his trespass-offering** (or guilt-offering) **unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned,** for the expiation of the guilt which he has loaded upon himself, **a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin,** cause his sin to be covered over before the face of the just and righteous God by virtue of the sacrifice which pointed forward to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. V. 7. **And if he be not able to bring a lamb,** if, on account of poverty, he cannot afford the more expensive animal, **then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed two turtle-doves or two young pigeons unto the Lord, one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt offering,** the two together forming a full sin-offering, and being given different names only on account of the different treatment which they received. V. 8. **And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin-offering first, and wring off his head from his neck,** kill the bird by pinching off his neck immediately behind his head, **but shall not divide it asunder,** not sever it entirely; v. 9. **and he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin-offering upon the side of the altar,** none of it, in this case, being smeared on the horns, probably because the amount was so small; **and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar; it is a sin-offering.** V. 10. **And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner,** as the ordinance of the Lord prescribed; **and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.** The ritual in this case was the same as when birds were offered for a burnt offering, chap. 1, 15—17. Through the symbolic rite of the atonement by blood the forgiveness of sins was secured for the believer. V. 11. **But if he be not able to bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons,** if the condition of poverty be very extreme, **then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour** (about two and one half quarts) **for a sin-offering. He shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon, as in the case of the meat-offerings; for it is a sin-offering** and, although offered without blood, was permitted in exceptional instances, since it was supplemented by the annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. V. 12. **Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar,** the intention being to bring the worshiper into remembrance before God, **according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord; it is a sin-offering,** and such an offering must not be mingled with the symbols of the Spirit and of the praise of God. V. 13. **And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these,** in the instances named above, **and it shall be forgiven him; and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat-offering.** This part was consecrated or set apart to be food for the priests in the holy place of the Sanctuary.

TRESPASS-OFFERINGS IN CASE OF IGNORANCE. V. 14. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** saying, v. 15. **If a soul commit a trespass,** break the faith, neglect to discharge a debt due to God or man, the former sins only being considered here, **and sin through ignorance in the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, for a trespass-offering.** The sin consisted here in withholding from the Lord the things that were consecrated to Him, first-fruits, tithes, or any gifts connected with the service of the Sanctuary. In the wilderness it was Moses, and afterward it was the officiating priest, who estimated the sacrificial animal, for its value had to be at least two shekels. V. 16. **And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing,** in neglecting to perform the services which were due to the Lord, **and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest,** as a penalty or forfeit for neglecting so important a duty toward the Lord; **and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering, and it shall be forgiven him,** the ceremony being performed as described in chap. 7, 1—6. V. 17. **And if a soul sin and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord;** the previous case was one of omission, the present case one of commission; **though he wist it not,** was not aware or did not realize the sinfulness of the act as it was being done, **yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.** By breaking a commandment of the Lord he had infringed upon some of the Lord's sovereign rights, and the guilt would rest upon him until such a time as atonement would be made. V. 18. **And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass-offering, unto the priest; and the priest shall**

make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, the transgressions of inadvertence, and it shall be forgiven him. V. 19. It is a trespass-offering; he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord. The sacrifice served for satisfaction, to make good the injury which had been inflicted. So far as the believers of the New Testament are concerned, they will take occasion regularly to examine their lives, and if they have become guilty of any transgression in word or deed, they will confess their sin to the Lord, asking forgiveness for the sake of Jesus.

CHAPTER 6.

A Summary Concerning Offerings.

OF TRESPASS-OFFERINGS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 2. If a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord,** break faith over against the Lord in some sin against his neighbor, — for the one included the other, — **and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep,** if he denies altogether having received anything of his neighbor in trust, **or in fellowship,** if he disclaims the receipt of some security, **or in a thing taken away by violence,** if he falsely states that he did not come into possession of his neighbor's property by sinful methods, **or hath deceived his neighbor,** in taking something from him by extortion or by a refusal to pay a just claim, if he invents excuses for the purpose of defrauding his neighbor, because he refuses to restore such property which he wrongfully holds; v. 3. **or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely,** if he adds perjury to the sins which he has already committed against the Seventh Commandment; **in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein,** v. 4. **then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found,** whether the sin was done secretly or openly, whether extortion or fraud was committed, with or without a show of right, v. 5. **or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto,** as a penalty or forfeit, **and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-offering.** The unlawfully gotten gain having been restored to his neighbor, the Lord also had to be reconciled, because the transgression was also directed against Him, Ps. 51, 4. No man could seek the divine forgiveness without having done all in his power to make amends for the wrong committed. V. 6. **And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass-offering unto the priest;** v. 7. **and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord; and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein,** as in the trespass-offering which was concerned exclusively with the Lord, chap. 5, 14—19; for these verses really belong to that paragraph and are so given in the Hebrew text. If Christians have been overcome by sin and are in any way guilty over against their neighbors, they should hasten to confess their sins and ask God for forgiveness in Christ Jesus. At the same time it is self-evident that they will make amends as quickly as possible, and as far as in their power lies.

OF BURNT OFFERINGS. — V. 8. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 9. **Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it.** All the paragraphs following contain special instructions for the priests with regard to the various offerings. The first paragraph relates to the daily burnt offering of a lamb at evening and in the morning, which was made at the cost of the entire congregation. Cp. Ex. 29, 38; Num. 28, 3. "The slow fire of the evening sacrifice was to be so arranged as to last until the morning; that of the morning sacrifice was ordinarily added to by other offerings, or if not, could easily be made to last through the much shorter interval until the evening. The evening sacrifice is naturally mentioned first because, in the Hebrew division of time, this was the beginning of the day." V. 10. **And the priest shall put on his linen garment,** Ex. 28, 40, **and his linen breeches shall be put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar;** the sacrifices having been turned to ashes in the burning, the officiating priest was to remove all these ashes; **and he shall put them beside the altar,** a special place being provided for that purpose on the east side of the court. V. 11. **And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place.** This duty was afterward performed by such members of the priestly family as were excluded from officiating at the altar by some bodily defect, chap. 21, 16—23. During the wilderness journey some clean place outside of the

camp could be used for the ashes from the altar of burnt offering; when the sanctuary of the Lord was in the Temple at Jerusalem, a place outside of the city was chosen. V. 12. **And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out,** even when there were no sacrifices to be burned; **and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning,** build up a great, glowing fire from the embers that had kept the fire going during the night, **and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings,** chap. 3. V. 13. **The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.** It signified the continual, uninterrupted fellowship of the children of Israel with the covenant God. In the heart of the Christians the flame of love toward God should burn at all times with unabated vigor, until the worshiper passes from believing to seeing.

OF MEAT-OFFERINGS. — V. 14. **And this is the law of the meat-offering,** as far as the priests were concerned: **The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, before the altar.** Cp. chap. 2, 2. 8. V. 15. **And he,** the officiating priest, **shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat-offering,** as much as his hand would hold, **and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat-offering, and shall burn it upon the altar,** of burnt offering, **for a sweet savor, even the memorial of it, unto the Lord.** V. 16. **And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat,** this ordinance being an addition to the directions which had been given before; **with unleavened bread,** or as unleavened bread, **shall it be eaten in the Holy Place,** no leaven or yeast being permitted in the preparation of this bread; **in the court of the Tabernacle of the Congregation they shall eat it,** where they were stationed when on duty. V. 17. **It shall not be baken with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of My offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin-offering and as the trespass-offering.** The entire offering was consecrated to the Lord, and He chose to give the greater portion of it to the priests for their maintenance. V. 18. **All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it,** even such as were too young or too old to be actively engaged in the priestly functions. **It shall be a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings of the Lord made by fire; every one that toucheth them shall be holy.** Only those that were set apart for the service of the Lord were permitted to partake of them, and any layman that touched them henceforth had the duty to keep himself from all uncleanness, just like the priests themselves. All Christians are priests of the most holy God and will therefore guard against defilement of every kind.

THE OFFERING OF CONSECRATION. — V. 19. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 20. **This is the offering of Aaron and of his sons which they shall offer unto the Lord in the day when he is anointed,** when he was ordained and inducted into office, it being his daily sacrifice: **the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat-offering perpetual, half of it in the morning and half thereof at night;** it was the high priest's daily oblation, in order to maintain his fellowship with God. V. 21. **In a pan it shall be made with oil; and when it is baken, thou shalt bring it in,** roasted or fried; **and the baken pieces of the meat-offering shalt thou offer for a sweet savor unto the Lord,** the sacrifice in its finished form being broken in pieces in the act of offering. V. 22. **And the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead shall offer it,** this solemn ceremony being one of the first acts of every new high priest; **it is a statute forever unto the Lord; it shall be wholly burned,** for it was considered a part of a burnt offering, and in those the worshiper had no part. V. 23. **For every meat-offering for the priest shall be wholly burned; it shall not be eaten.** The priest himself being the worshiper, the entire oblation went to the Lord.

OF SIN-OFFERINGS. — V. 24. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 25. **Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin-offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed,** on the north side of the altar, in the court of the Tabernacle, **shall the sin-offering be killed before the Lord; it is most holy,** set apart for the Lord. V. 26. **The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it,** that is, all but the fat of the abdominal cavity and the kidneys, unless it was specifically ordered that the entire animal had to be burned outside the camp; **in the Holy Place shall it be eaten, in the court of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** V. 27. **Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy** (cp. v. 18); **and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the Holy Place.** So strict was the Law in this case that the priest had to have the dress of the worshiper washed before he left the court of the Sanctuary, in case any of the blood of the sacrificial animal was spattered on it. The entire animal with its blood belonged to the Lord, and not even a drop of the latter could be carried out of the Sanctuary on the garment of the worshiper. V. 28. **But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden shall be broken,** since the blood and the juices of the flesh would be absorbed by the unglazed material; **and if it be sodden in a brazen pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in**

water, so that no particle of the sacrifice would cling to it. V. 29. **All the males among the priests shall eat thereof; it is most holy.** V. 30. **And no sin-offering whereof any of the blood is brought into the Tabernacle of the Congregation to reconcile withal in the Holy Place, as in the sin-offering for the priest and for the entire congregation, also on the Day of Atonement, chap. 4; 16, 27, shall be eaten; it shall be burnt in the fire.** Also in this respect the sin-offering for the whole congregation was a type of Christ, who suffered for our sins without the gate, Heb. 13, 11. 12.

CHAPTER 7.

Various Ordinances Concerning Sacrifices.

OF TRESPASS-OFFERINGS. — V. 1. **Likewise this is the law of the trespass-offering: It is most holy.** The difference between the sin-offering and the trespass-offering may in general be said to consist in this, that the latter was required in the case of more serious offenses. V. 2. **In the place where they kill the burnt offering shall they kill the trespass-offering,** that is, north of the altar in the court; **and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar,** upon its four walls. V. 3. **And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards,** the large net of adipose membrane, v. 4. **and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks,** attached to the muscles in the upper part of the pelvic region, **and the caul,** the smaller net of adipose tissue, **that is above the liver, with the kidneys,** upon the kidneys, **it shall he take away;** v. 5. **and the priest shall burn them upon the altar for an offering made by fire unto the Lord; it is a trespass-offering.** V. 6. **Every male among the priests shall eat thereof,** as in the case of the sin-offering, chap. 6, 26; **it shall be eaten in the Holy Place; it is most holy.** V. 7. **As the sin-offering is, so is the trespass-offering; there is one law for them,** for every act that brings guilt upon a person, whether it is a sin of ignorance or a more serious transgression, is in need of atonement; **the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have it;** not the priests on duty in a body, but the individual officiating priest received the flesh of the sacrificial animal. V. 8. **And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, even the priest, shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.** The Hebrew text brings out with great emphasis the fact that the skin of the slain animal was to belong to the officiating priest. It was a part of the payment for his services. V. 9. **And all the meat-offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is dressed in the frying-pan,** cooked in the kettle, **and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it,** with the exception, of course, of the handful which was burned as a memorial to the Lord. V. 10. **And every meat-offering, mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another.** Thus was the distinction observed between the dry, or uncooked, meat-offering and that prepared on or in the oven. Incidentally, the people were always reminded of the fact that the laborer was worthy of his reward.

OF PEACE-OFFERINGS. — V. 11. **And this is the law of sacrifice of peace-offerings which he shall offer unto the Lord.** The peace-offerings were made for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the fellowship with the covenant God, and may be divided into offerings of thanksgiving and into vow or voluntary offerings. V. 12. **If he offer it for a thanksgiving,** in grateful acknowledgment of some special favor shown him by the Lord, **then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.** Cp. chap. 2, 4. 5. V. 13. **Besides the cakes,** which were unleavened, **he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings.** V. 14. **And of it,** of the entire gift as presented to the Lord, **he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave-offering unto the Lord,** one of each kind of cakes, **and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace-offerings,** the rest being returned to the worshiper for the sacrificial meal. The heave-offering was taken into the hands and waved up and down before the altar, but not placed upon it. V. 15. **And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.** This provision applied specifically to this form of the peace-offering: the sacrificial meal was to be held the same day. V. 16. **But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow or a voluntary offering,** brought whenever a believer felt the need of cementing the fellowship between himself and the Lord, **it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice; and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten,** two days being allowed in this case for consuming the flesh of the sacrificial animal; v. 17. **but the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire,** and thus be destroyed completely. V. 18. **And**

if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, in violation of God's will, **it shall not be accepted,** the entire sacrifice would be made in vain, **neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it,** that is, as a sacrifice which is well-pleasing to the Lord; **it shall be an abomination,** hateful and nauseating to God, **and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity,** not only the worshiper immediately concerned, but also the members of his family and his friends who might partake of the meal. V. 19. **And the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing shall not be eaten,** in such event it must be discarded at once; **it shall be burned with fire; and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof,** that is, of the clean flesh of the sacrifice. V. 20. **But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings that pertain unto the Lord,** that have been consecrated to Him by the offering, **having his uncleanness upon him,** any form of Levitical defilement, **even that soul shall be cut off from his people.** V. 21. **Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing,** cp. chaps. 12—15, **and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings which pertain unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.** The abomination spoken of here included all the unclean fishes, birds, and smaller mammals, and the defilement of unclean animals was confined to their carcasses, carrion being considered especially filthy. The Lord indicates here that He wants pure hands and pure hearts in His service. But to this day true sacrifices of thanksgiving and the paying of vows are acts well-pleasing to the Lord, if they are done in true faith and love toward Him, Ps. 50, 14.

The Eating of Fat and Blood Forbidden. V. 22. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 23. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat.** This seems to apply to the fat of the abdominal cavity in sacrificial animals only, chap. 3, 17. V. 24. **And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself,** its blood therefore not having a chance to drain out, **and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use,** for purposes of every-day life; **but ye shall in no wise eat of it,** for animals that found their death in this manner were unclean and defiled those that ate of their flesh or of their fat. V. 25. **For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** the loose fat of the abdominal cavity, **even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people.** V. 26. **Moreover, ye shall eat no manner of blood,** a prohibition which had been given as early as the time of Noah, Gen. 9, 4; cp. chap. 3, 17; 17, 10—14, **whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings.** V. 27. **Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.** The blood was regarded as the bearer of the soul of the animal, and the latter had been set apart for the atonement of men; hence its great value and the strictness of the prohibition. As a holy people, the children of Israel were to avoid every form of defilement.

The Portion of Jehovah. — V. 28. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 29. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace-offerings unto the Lord shall bring his oblation unto the Lord of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings,** that special gift which belonged to the Lord and was intended to establish the fellowship between Him and the worshiper. V. 30. **His own hands shall bring the offerings of the Lord made by fire,** the parts consecrated to Jehovah, **the fat with the breast, it shall he bring,** in person, not by the hands of a servant or messenger, **that the breast may be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord.** This part of the animal is now known as the brisket, and it was offered to the Lord by moving the hands back and forth in a motion of weaving. V. 31. **And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar; but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons',** the common property of the priestly order. V. 32. **And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest,** the officiating priest alone, **for an heave-offering of the sacrifices of your peace-offerings.** The ceremony of offering here consisted in a simple lifting up of the gift on high. V. 33. **He among the sons of Aaron that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings and the fat shall have the right shoulder for his part.** V. 34. **For the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron, the priest, and unto his sons by a statute forever from among the children of Israel.** As long as the Aaronic priesthood was to endure, so long were the Israelites to make their payment of fees to the priests as here set forth. V. 35. **This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron and of the anointing of his sons,** these are the parts of the animals which were set aside for their emoluments, **out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the Lord in the priest's office,** these were their fees beginning with the day that Moses inducted them into office; v. 36. **which the Lord commanded to be given them of the children of Israel in the day that he** (Moses) **anointed them, by a statute forever throughout their generations.** V. 37.

This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the trespass-offering, and of the consecrations, of the fillings of the hands which characterized the priest's work, Ex. 29, 19—28; Lev. 6, 20, **and of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings,** the whole law of sacrifice having been given in the preceding chapters; v. 38. **which the Lord commanded Moses in Mount Sinai, in the day that He commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations,** both their voluntary gifts and their stated sacrifices, **unto the Lord, in the Wilderness of Sinai.** All the sacrificial meals of the Old Testament were but weak types of the intimate fellowship with God which we, as the members of the household of God, enjoy in the Gospel, Luke 14, 15; 22, 30.

CHAPTER 8.

The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons.

PUTTING ON THE GARMENTS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread;** v. 3. **and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** The detailed instructions of the Lord regarding the consecration of the priests, Ex. 28, 29, and 40, were now to be carried out. "This is the ordinance: first the persons; then the garments, as symbols of the office; the anointing oil, the symbol of the Spirit; the bullock for the sin-offering, the symbol of the priest favored with the entrusted atonement, and yet needing favor; the ram for the burnt offering, the symbol of the sacrificial employment; the ram for the sacrifice of consecration, the symbol of the priestly emoluments in true sacrifices of consecration; and the basket of unleavened bread, the symbol of life's enjoyment of the priests, sanctified in every form by the oil of the Spirit." (Lange.) V. 4. **And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** V. 5. **And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.** Very likely Moses repeated the entire ordinance referring to the consecration of the priests before the act of consecration was begun, as he had recorded the Lord's words. V. 6. **And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water,** very likely the whole body, a screen obviating the apparent impropriety, as on the Day of Atonement. This washing was symbolical of the purity of soul required in all those that draw near to God, and applies to all believers of the New Testament, as kings and priests before God and the Father. V. 7. **And he put upon him the coat,** the long garment of shining byssus, **and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe,** the hyacinth-colored, close-fitting tunic, **and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious** (skilfully made) **girdle of the ephod, of** variegated material, **and bound it unto him therewith.** V. 8. **And he put the breastplate upon him,** fastening it to the front of the ephod; **also he put in the breastplate,** in the pocket formed by the doubling of the material, **the Urim and the Thummim.** Cp. Ex. 28, 30. V. 9. **And he put the miter upon his head; also upon the miter, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown,** the diadem of holiness, with the inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord," **as the Lord commanded Moses.** V. 10. **And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the Tabernacle,** the curtains or hangings of the tent, **and all that was therein,** the Ark of the Covenant, the altar of incense, the table of showbread, the candlestick, and all their instruments, **and sanctified them.** V. 11. **And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar,** namely, of burnt offering, **seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them,** Ex. 40, 6—10. V. 12. **And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.** According to Jewish tradition, the anointing of the ordinary priests, which is not mentioned here, although referred to repeatedly, as in Num. 3, 3, differed from that of the high priest inasmuch as the oil was applied to their foreheads only. V. 13. **And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets,** bound caps, **upon them, as the Lord commanded Moses.** The minuteness of the description shows how thoroughly the believers of the Old Testament were in bondage under externals, Gal. 4, 3, from whose dominion we have been freed by the work of Christ.

THE SACRIFICES. — V. 14. **And he brought the bullock for the sin-offering,** Moses here, as the mediator of the covenant, performing the functions of the Lord's priest. **And Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin-offering,** in token of the transfer of their guilt to the sacrificial animal. V. 15. **And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and**

poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it to make reconciliation upon it. The altar of burnt offering, although consecrated to the Lord, was yet in need of the purifying blood, in order to sanctify it for the service of the priests, to cover the sins with which they, as sinful men, would defile it while performing the work of their ministry. V. 16. **And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burned it upon the altar.** V. 17. **But the bullock, and his hide, his flesh, and his dung he burned with fire without the camp,** as in the case of all sin-offerings, chap. 4, 8—12; **as the Lord commanded Moses,** Ex. 29, 12—14. V. 18. **And he brought the ram for the burnt offering,** the second of the three great sacrifices; **and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram,** which thereby was designated as their substitute in the sacrifice. V. 19. **And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.** V. 20. **And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat.** V. 21. **And he washed the inwards,** the intestines, and the legs in water; **and Moses burned the whole ram upon the altar. It was a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savor, and an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** according to the ordinance, chap. 1, 3—9; **as the Lord commanded Moses,** Ex. 29, 15—18. V. 22. **And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration,** literally, the ram of fillings, that with which the hands of Aaron and his sons were to be filled for the wave-offering, as they were about to make it. The ceremony signified that the priests were now set apart for the service of bringing sacrifices in the name of the children of Israel. **And Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.** V. 23. **And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot,** to signify that he was to hear the Word of the Lord, perform His will, and walk in the way of His commandments. V. 24. **And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.** Cp. Ex. 29, 19. 20. V. 25. **And he took the fat, and the rump,** the fatty tail which is found to this day in the Khirgiz variety of the Asiatic sheep, **and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat,** all the fatty membranes and the loose fat of the abdominal cavity, **and the right shoulder,** commonly known as the heave-shoulder; v. 26. **and out of the basket of unleavened bread that was before the Lord he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer,** one piece of each variety of meat-offering, **and put them on the fat and upon the right shoulder;** v. 27. **and he put all upon Aaron's hands and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave-offering before the Lord.** He stretched out his hands beneath those of Aaron and his sons, and then they all together moved their hands back and forth in a weaving motion, an act which always signified dedication to the Lord. V. 28. **And Moses took them from off their hands, and burned them on the altar upon the burnt offering; they were consecrations for a sweet savor,** sacrifices by which they were really installed in their office. **It is an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** Cp. Ex. 29, 22—25. V. 29. **And Moses took the breast and waved it for a wave-offering before the Lord; for of the ram of consecration it was Moses' part; as the Lord commanded Moses,** Ex. 29, 27. V. 30. **And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.** This ceremony completed the consecration service on this and on each succeeding day. Cp. Ex. 29, 21. The priests were to perform the work of their service in the power of the Spirit of God.

Final Instructions. — V. 31. **And Moses said unto Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** in a holy place in the court, Ex. 29, 31; **and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecrations, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it.** No lay person was permitted to partake of this sacrificial meal, for the food was holy, having served for the expiation and consecration of the priests. V. 32. **And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread shall ye burn with fire.** Cp. chap. 7, 17. V. 33. **And ye shall not go out of the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** out of the great entrance which led to the Sanctuary, **in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end; for seven days shall he consecrate you.** V. 34. **As he hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you.** On each one of the seven days the same rite was performed, at least so far as the sacrifices were concerned. V. 35. **Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord,** observe His precept, **that ye die**

not; for so I am commanded. V. 36. **So Aaron and his sons did all things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.** Seven days they passed in holy seclusion in the court, seven days they brought the appointed sacrifices and lived on the sacrifice of consecration; what remained of it they did not devote to common or profane use, but they took care to burn it. For seven days they kept holy watch, the watch of Jehovah, in the court of the Tabernacle, under the penalty of death. Moses made particularly prominent the symbolic force of this divine watch: it was Jehovah's express commandment.

CHAPTER 9.

Aaron Enters upon His Office.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SACRIFICES.— V. 1. **And it came to pass on the eighth day,** after the seven days of consecration, **that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel,** for it was necessary that the priesthood be in active exercise of its duties at once. V. 2. **And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf,** a bull calf, or very young bullock, **for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord.** These first offerings of Aaron were made altogether under the directions of Moses as the mouthpiece of God, for he was just entering upon his office. The fact that Aaron, in spite of the consecration with all its sacrifices, still began the work of his ministry with a sin-offering and a burnt offering, shows plainly that the sacrifices of the Old Testament cultus cannot make those perfect that offer them, Heb. 10, 1. The temporary, the typical and symbolical character of the ancient sacrifices appears throughout. V. 3. **And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying,** instructing them in the capacity of high priest, **Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin-offering,** which was otherwise the offering for a prince, chap. 4, 23; **and a calf,** a young bullock, chap. 1, 5, **and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering;** v. 4. **also a bullock and a ram for peace-offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord; and a meat-offering mingled with oil,** representative sacrifices from every group; **for to-day the Lord will appear unto you,** that solemn manifestation was to be the climax of the day's events. V. 5. **And they brought that which Moses commanded before the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord,** in the court of the Tabernacle and in its immediate neighborhood. V. 6. **And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commanded that ye should do;** they should now witness the formal beginning of the worship by sacrifices, the explanation of Moses serving to make them attentive and intelligent witnesses; **and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you.** This announcement was made in order to keep the people both interested and devout during the offering of the sacrifices. V. 7. **And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar and offer thy sin-offering and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself and for the people, and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them, as the Lord commanded.** That was the nucleus of the idea of the sacrifices, that was the purpose of the offerings at all times, to cover the sins in the sight of God, that He might forgive them. And all this was accomplished for the believing Israelites in view of the perfect atonement of Jesus Christ, of which the blood atonement made by their priests was but a dim picture.

THE FIRST OFFERINGS.—V. 8. **Aaron, therefore, went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering, which was for himself.** V. 9. **And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him,** thus performing the work which was afterward assigned to the Levites in catching the blood of the slaughtered animal and keeping it from coagulating; **and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar.** He brought no blood into the Holy Place, for the object at this time was the removal of the sin which might make his service in the name of the congregation displeasing to the Lord. The sin-offering served to remove the estrangement which existed between God and the people on account of the trespasses made by Israel, individually and collectively. V. 10. **But the fat and the kidneys and the caul above the liver of the sin-offering he burned upon the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses,** chap. 4, 8. V. 11. **And the flesh and the hide he burned with fire without the camp,** chap. 4, 11. V. 12. **And he slew the burnt offering,** according to the ordinance, chap. 1, 3—9; 8, 18—21; **and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood,** passed it to him as before, **which he sprinkled round about upon the altar.** V. 13. **And they presented the burnt offering unto him with the pieces thereof and the head;** they passed the single pieces to him as he had dissected the animal; **and he burned them upon the altar.** This sacrifice expressed the complete and devout surrender of the worshipers to the Lord. V. 14. **And he did wash the inwards and the legs, and burned them upon the burnt offering on the altar.** No mention is made of an oblation of meat-offering with this

sacrifice, either because the special law referring to this rite was not yet given, Num. 15, 2 ff., or because it had already been made in connection with the morning sacrifice. V. 15. **And he brought the people's offering,** which consisted of all three varieties of sacrifices, made in the usual order, **and took the goat, which was the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first.** In this case also the blood was not brought into the Holy Place, for the purpose at this time was merely to make the proper beginning of the sacrificial worship. V. 16. **And he brought the burnt offering,** the young bullock and the lamb, **and offered it according to the manner,** as the ordinance required it. V. 17. **And he brought the meat-offering,** which accompanied the burnt offering, **and took an handful thereof, and burned it upon the altar beside,** that is, in addition to, **the burnt sacrifice of the morning;** for the usual offerings had been made on this morning, as always. V. 18. **He slew also the bullock and the ram for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which was for the people,** an act of thanksgiving for the grace received till now and a prayer for the maintenance of the merciful fellowship on the part of Jehovah. **And Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled upon the altar round about.** V. 19. **And the fat of the bullock and of the ram, the rump,** that is, the heavy, fatty tail, **and that which covereth the inwards and the kidneys and the caul above the liver,** all the loose fat of the abdominal cavities; v. 20. **and they put the fat upon the breasts,** upon the wave-breasts of the two animals, and passed it to Aaron in this manner; **and he burned the fat upon the altar;** v. 21. **and the breasts and the right shoulder,** the wave-breasts and the heave-shoulders, **Aaron waved for a wave-offering before the Lord,** chap. 7, 30—34; **as Moses commanded.** V. 22. **And Aaron,** standing upon the elevated slope which led to the altar of burnt offering, **lifted up his hand toward the people,** in a gesture transmitting the grace of the Lord, **and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin-offering and the burnt offering and peace-offerings.** The various animals had been dissected and laid on the fire according to the ordinance of God, and the service was concluded with the blessing. Cp. Num. 6, 22—24. V. 23. **And Moses and Aaron went into the Tabernacle of the Congregation;** for the latter had to be introduced to his future place of activity, as a part of the ceremony of installation; **and came out and blessed the people. And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people;** there was some glorious manifestation in the cloud which covered the Tabernacle, the presence of the Lord thus being demonstrated with great effectiveness. V. 24. **And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat.** Either the entire cloud shone with a supernatural light, or there was a sudden flash of fire from the cloud, like a bolt of lightning, which in a moment completely devoured the sacrifices smoldering upon the altar. Similar manifestations of God's glory are related also at later times, especially at the dedication of the Temple of Solomon. **Which when all the people saw, they shouted,** they called out in glad wonder, thanksgiving, and praise, **and fell on their faces,** in the gesture expressing joyful and reverential awe. The awe which we Christians feel at the manifestation of Him in whom is life, and the life is the light of men, John 1, 4, will continue through time into eternity.

CHAPTER 10.

The Death of Nadab and Abihu and Its Lessons.

The Sin of Nadab and Abihu and Its Punishment. — V. 1. **And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not.** Nadab and Abihu were probably the oldest sons of Aaron, and were distinguished by Moses in being selected to accompany him to the feast before the Lord, Ex. 24, 1. 9. The chances are that they were unduly exalted over their initiation into the priesthood and believed themselves competent to select their own methods of worshiping the Lord. They took two of the small vessels pertaining to the golden altar, put some fire in them which was not taken from the altar of burnt offering, and proceeded to offer incense to the Lord in these censers of their own selecting, whereas incense was to be offered only on the golden altar by the officiating priest twice daily, Ex. 30, 7. 8. V. 2. **And there went out fire from the Lord,** this time in consuming wrath, as it had shortly before flashed forth in an expression of mercy, **and devoured them; and they died before the Lord.** It was like a bolt of lightning which struck them dead without consuming their bodies or even their clothes. The punishment struck them while they were yet in the Sanctuary or in the court. Our God, in His jealousy, is a consuming fire, and will occasionally even now strike down such as blasphemously presume upon rights before Him which they do not possess. V. 3. **Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them**

that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified. That was the explanation of this severe judgment. Since the two young men had omitted the proper preparation and had acted contrary to the commandment of the Lord, therefore He had sanctified Himself upon them by this punishment, which was to redound to His glory as the Holy One, who will not be mocked by disobedience. **And Aaron held his peace;** he was unable to gainsay the righteousness of the act of God, as set forth by Moses. V. 4. **And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron,** Ex. 6, 18, and his own cousins, **and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the Sanctuary out of the camp.** The two dead men were the brethren, the relatives, of the men who were to perform the last rites over them; and they were buried in their linen coats, for these priestly garments had been defiled with the dead bodies. V. 5. **So they went near and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said,** the people meanwhile looking on in a kind of stupefied awe. V. 6. **And Moses said unto Aaron and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes,** the usual manner of showing a high degree of mourning being to let the hair of the head grow without trimming and cutting and to tear open the garments over the breast, **lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people.** A transgression of the high priest, as the mediator between God and the people, involved the latter in the punishment of God. To mourn in this case would have been equivalent to expressing dissatisfaction with the judgments of the Lord and would have brought His punishment upon the offenders and upon all whom they represented. **But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled,** the terrible expression of God's wrath in destroying the priests, the sad calamity that had befallen them. V. 7. **And ye shall not go out from the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** in order to join the funeral procession or in any way to permit an intermission to take place in the priestly functions, **lest ye die; for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.** The anointing oil was the symbol of the Spirit of the living God, who has nothing in common with death, but rather conquers death, and sin which causes death. Cp. chap. 21, 12.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIESTS. — V. 8. **And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying,** He now addressed Himself directly to the high priest to let him know His will, v. 9. **Do not drink wine nor strong drink,** the latter being a very strongly intoxicating beverage made from barley, dates, and honey, **thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** when engaged in the duties of the priesthood, **lest ye die; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations;** it was practically equivalent to absolute prohibition in the case of Aaron and his sons, for they must have been on duty continually, especially in the early days; later the priests were on duty in the Sanctuary only a short time during the year; v. 10. **and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;** their minds had to be clear for the many cases which required careful distinguishing; v. 11. **and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.** The priests were at the same time the teachers of the people, and their minds did not dare to be befuddled with the fumes of intoxicating liquors while they were engaged in the discharge of their duties. V. 12. **And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat-offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire,** only a handful having been offered, chap. 9, 17, **and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy.** It was used as food for the priests in a place provided for that purpose in the court. V. 13. **And ye shall eat it in the Holy Place, because it is thy due;** it was a fee which was intended for the sustenance of the priests while they were on duty in the Sanctuary, **and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire; for so I am commanded.** V. 14. **And the wave-breast and heave-shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou and thy sons and thy daughters with thee; for they be thy due and thy sons' due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Israel.** This was the portion set aside for the priests and their families, fees or emoluments, a part of the salary, and this holy meal could be eaten outside of the court, in some clean place. V. 15. **The heave-shoulder and the wave-breast shall they bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave-offering before the Lord; and it shall be thine, and thy sons' with thee, by a statute forever, as the Lord hath commanded,** chap. 7, 31—34. V. 16. **And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin-offering,** for since its blood had been poured out at the altar of burnt offering, its flesh, being a sin-offering, should have been eaten by the priests in the Holy Place, **and, behold, it was burned; and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, which were left alive, saying,** v. 17. **Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the Holy Place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make an atonement for them before the**

Lord? The priests, being mediators of the people in offering the sacrifices, were bound to follow the ritual in all its details, and the eating of the flesh was an essential part of this service. V. 18. **Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the Holy Place,** to the altar of incense, as it was described chap. 4, 1—21; **ye should indeed have eaten it in the Holy Place, as I commanded.** Having undertaken the atonement for the people, the responsibility for the sins and that of carrying out every single precept of the sacrifice rested upon them. V. 19. **And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin-offering and their burnt offering before the Lord,** the priests had made these offerings for themselves; **and such things have befallen me,** in being bereft of two of his sons; **and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord?** The fearful accident which had happened had made Aaron and his remaining sons incapable of and unfit for eating. Cp. Hos. 9, 4. V. 20. **And when Moses heard that, he was content,** literally, "it was good in his eyes," he was satisfied that no disregard of the Lord's precepts was intended, that the circumstances warranted Aaron and his sons in acting as they did. The law of love is the highest law and supersedes all others. It was so in the Old Testament, as it is in the New, that God desired mercy rather than sacrifice.

CHAPTER 11.

Ordinances Regarding Clean and Unclean Animals.

Of Mammals. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them,** Aaron being included as the high priest consecrated for the purpose of making an atonement for the sins of the people, v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.** From the animals in general the Lord distinguishes the domestic animals and those commonly used for food by the inhabitants of the countries round about. V. 3. **Whatsoever parteth the hoof and is cloven-footed,** so that the hoof is not only partially, but completely divided into two parts, **and cheweth the cud, among the beasts,** as a member of the true ruminants, **that shall ye eat.** V. 4. **Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof; as, the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof,** there being only a partial division of the hoof; **he is unclean unto you.** V. 5. **And the coney,** a marmot-like animal of the size of a hare living in caves and clefts of the rocks, **because he cheweth the cud,** making the characteristic mouth-movements of the ruminants, **but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.** V. 6. **And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.** Though the two last-named animals have not the three or four stomachs of the real ruminants, the motion which they make with their mouths as they sit before their burrows is that of chewing the cud. V. 7. **And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you.** Since pigs were nothing but scavengers in Oriental lands, and since the eating of pork in those circumstances often resulted in diseases of the skin, many of the ancient peoples considered them unclean. V. 8. **Of their flesh shall ye not eat, to slaughter these animals for food was strictly forbidden, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.**

Of Animals Living in Water. — V. 9. **These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat,** all the animals that are fishes according to the common use of the word. V 10. **And all that have not fins and scales in the seas and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters,** all the smaller animals that throng the ocean, including also lobsters, crabs, oysters, and every other kind of marine animal, **and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you;** v. 11. **they shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination.** V. 12. **Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you,** was utterly to be abhorred.

Of Animals of the Air. — V. 13. **And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey,** three varieties of eagles, the latter two being more exactly identified as the sea eagle and the black eagle, respectively, v. 14. **and the vulture,** a ravenous bird which may have been similar to a hawk or falcon, **and the kite after his kind,** the class of hawks which includes the chicken-hawk, v. 15. **every raven after his kind,** all the birds that belong to this family, including crows and blackbirds of every description, v. 16. **and the owl,** literally, "the daughter of the desert," the ostrich, **and the night-hawk,** very likely the desert owl, **and the cuckoo,** either the desert hawk or the seagull, **and the hawk after his kind,** the entire family of falcons, v. 17. **and the little owl,** often found in ruins, **and the cormorant,**

or a kind of pelican found in Syria, **and the great owl**, also a frequenter of ruins in the desert, v. 18. **and the swan**, probably an owl with a dismal cry, **and the pelican, and the gier-eagle**, or carrion vulture, v. 19. **and the stork, the heron after her kind**, the entire tribe of swamp birds, **and the lapwing, and the bat**, which was at that time commonly enumerated with the birds. V. 20. **All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you.** As those that had been mentioned until now were chiefly such as lived on filth and carrion, they were unclean. They are here classed with the vermin of the earth, with the smaller animals equipped with wings for flight. V. 21. **Yet these may ye eat of every flying, creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth**, whose strong hind legs are built for jumping; v. 22. even **these of them ye may eat: the locust after his kind**, the migratory variety, **and the bald locust after his kind**, an exceptionally voracious variety, **and the beetle after his kind**, a very large, hopping variety of grasshopper, **and the grasshopper after his kind**, a variety with only rudimentary wings. The insects here named were very commonly used as food by the poorer classes of the Orient, either roasted or broiled in butter and eaten with spices and vinegar. Locusts are mentioned as the food of John the Baptist, Matt. 3, 4. V. 23. **But all other flying, creeping things which have four feet**, that walk, not in an upright, but in a horizontal position, "on all fours," **shall be an abomination unto you.** V. 24. **And for these ye shall be unclean; whosoever toucheth the carcass of them shall be unclean until the even**; contact with their dead bodies should be avoided under penalty of being declared unclean for the day. V. 25. **And whosoever beareth aught of the carcass of them**, even in removing it from his land, **shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even.** V. 26. **The carcasses of every beast which divideth the hoof, and is not cloven-footed nor cheweth the cud, are unclean unto you; every one that toucheth them shall be unclean.** V. 27. **And whatsoever goeth upon his paws**, or, the bare soles of whose feet touch the ground, as in most beasts of prey, **among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you; whoso toucheth their carcass shall be unclean until the even.** V. 28. **And he that beareth the carcass of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even**, being contaminated in even a higher degree than the one that merely touched the carcass; **they are unclean unto you.**

OF THE SMALLER ANIMALS. GENERAL PRECEPTS. — V. 29. **These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the weasel**, which often entered houses and defiled foods, **and the mouse**, that is, the field-mouse, **and the tortoise after his kind**, the great lizard of the Orient, v. 30. **and the ferret**, or rather a lizard with a sharp cry, **and the chameleon**, a salamanderlike lizard living in old walls, **and the lizard, and the snail**, either the true lizard or one similar to the blind-worm of Europe, **and the mole**, the word here used seeming to point definitely to the chameleon. Note that the equivalent of the Hebrew names can be given only approximately in the English language, since we have no means of knowing to which of the species now occurring in the Orient the various words apply, or whether perhaps certain species are not extinct. V. 31. **These are unclean to you among all that creep; whosoever doth touch them when they be dead shall be unclean until the even.** The ordinance concerning them was so strict, not because these animals in themselves were unusually filthy, but because there was greater likelihood of their coming in contact with clothes and with vessels in the houses. V. 32. **And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean**, for it might easily happen that one of them would fall out of a wall or from the open ceiling; **whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment**, garments of every kind, **or skin**, used for churning, for holding wine and other liquids, and for a variety of purposes, **or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done**, that is, put to any use in the household or shop, **it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even; so it shall be cleansed.** V. 33. **And every earthen vessel whereinto any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it**, since the porous nature of it would cause it to absorb some of the filthiness. V. 34. **Of all meat which may be eaten, that on which such water cometh**, which has been in contact with the carcass of such a creature, **shall be unclean; and all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean**, it was defiled by the touch of the dead animal. V. 35. **And everything whereupon any part of their carcass falleth shall be unclean, whether it be oven**, the larger bake-oven, **or ranges for pots**, small, portable ovens of earthenware, **they shall be broken down; for they are unclean and shall be unclean unto you.** V. 36. **Nevertheless a fountain or pit, wherein there is plenty of water**, a spring or cistern with an abundance of fresh water or with the only water supply for an entire neighborhood, **shall be clean; but that**, or rather, he, **which toucheth their carcass**, in order to carry it away, **shall be unclean.** V. 37. **And if any part of their carcass fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it shall be clean**, the external filthiness on the dry grains being ab-

sorbed by the earth. V. 38. **But if any water be put upon the seed, and any part of their carcass fall thereon, it shall be unclean unto you,** for in this case the uncleanness would be absorbed by the moisture in the kernels. V. 39. **And if any beast of which ye may eat, die,** if an animal belonging to the category of clean animals die a natural death or be torn by wild beasts, **he that toucheth the carcass thereof shall be unclean until the even.** V. 40. **And he that eateth of the carcass of it shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even; he also that beareth the carcass of it shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even.** In either case contact of the clothes with the dead animal was practically unavoidable. V. 41. **And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth,** all crawling and four-footed vermin, **shall be an abomination; it shall not be eaten.** V. 42. **Whatsoever goeth upon the belly,** as serpents and worms, **and whatsoever goeth upon all four,** as mice, rats, weasels, moles, **or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth,** as centipedes, spiders, and other arthropods, **them ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination.** V. 43. **Ye shall not make yourselves abominable,** literally, "ye shall not make your souls an abomination," **with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby.** The children of Israel, as the people of the Lord, must keep away from every form of defilement.

A STRONG CONCLUDING ARGUMENT. — V. 44. **For I am the Lord, your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy,** consecrated, holy persons, set aside for the service of God; **for I am holy; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth,** either by using such animals for food or by handling them needlessly. V. 45. **For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt,** that was the mighty work in which He was then engaged, **to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.** V. 46. **This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth;** v. 47. **to make a difference,** to observe the distinction, **between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.** Thus the regulating principle was laid down by which the children of Israel were to be governed in their selection of animals for food. We Christians of the New Testament are no longer bound by this Ceremonial Law; for God has taught us not to regard anything as common and unclean, Acts 10, 15. In abstaining from using as food most of the animals mentioned in the list we are merely following the rules of hygiene, in the spirit of Christian liberty.

CHAPTER 12.

The Purification after Childbirth.

V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** v. 2. **saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed,** brought forth bodily issue, **and born a man child,** a boy, **then she shall be unclean seven days,** this being the time of her personal uncleanness, during which every person and thing touched by her itself became defiled; **according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean,** that is, during the average time of the flow following birth. V. 3. **And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised,** Gen. 17, this notice being here inserted lest this very necessary rite be neglected. V. 4. **And she shall then,** counting from the eighth day, **continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days,** this making a total of forty days, during which she was to stay at home, although the restrictions of the first seven days were now made much lighter; **she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the Sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.** Although free to perform the ordinary duties of the household, she could not take part in sacrificial meals, the Passover and other festivals, nor was she permitted to enter the court of the Sanctuary. The forty days were the symbolical time of purification, of exclusion from the world. V. 5. **But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation,** the extra seven days probably being an equivalent for the rite of circumcision in the case of the boy; **and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying,** for the average length of the entire flow, **threescore and six days,** this making a total of eighty days in the case of a girl. Natural sanitary reasons were probably the basis of the Levitical ordinance. V. 6. **And when the days of her purification are fulfilled, for a son or for a daughter,** that is, depending upon the fact whether it was a boy or a girl that had been born, **she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin-offering, unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, unto the priest,** v. 7. **who shall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood.** "The order of the offerings is

a remarkable deviation from the general principle that, when the two offerings came together, the sin-offering always preceded. The reason of this exception appears to lie in the fact that at the birth of a child feelings of joy and gratitude are naturally uppermost; the thought of the child's heritage of sinfulness comes afterward." **This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.** V. 8. **And if she be not able to bring a lamb,** if her poverty is such as to make it impossible for her to afford a lamb, **then she shall bring two turtles** (turtle-doves) **or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering and the other for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.** A significant light is thrown upon the external circumstances of Joseph's share in this world's goods by the fact that Mary was obliged to bring the sacrifice of the poor people at the time of her purification, Luke 2, 24. Note also: As the little Jewish baby was received into fellowship with the covenant God by the rite of circumcision, so Christian children, cleansed from the guilt of inherited sin by the washing of Baptism, are placed into the arms of their Savior for their soul's salvation.

CHAPTER 13.

Ordinances Concerning Leprosy.

V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron,** saying, v. 2. **When a man,** a person of either sex, **shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising,** a raised spot on the epidermis, or cuticle, of his skin, **a scab, or bright spot,** one of a whitish tinge, **and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy,** the characteristic spot or sore which indicated the presence of the dread disease, **then he shall be brought unto Aaron, the priest, or unto one of his sons, the priests;** v. 3. **and the priest shall look on the plague,** on the spot or sore, **in the skin of the flesh; and when the hair in the plague,** on the suspicious spot, **is turned white,** this sign was all the more striking since the hair of the Jews was normally black, **and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh,** when the spot appeared to have sunken into the skin, **it is a plague of leprosy; and the priest shall look on him and pronounce him unclean.** The name leprosy is derived from a word meaning "to strike, to strike to the ground," the leper being a person who has been stricken or smitten by God. The sickness is contagious only, but was and is commonly treated as being infectious as well. Three forms of the disease were distinguished in olden times: the white leprosy, which was very prevalent among the Hebrews, the tubercular leprosy, or the Egyptian boil, and the black leprosy.[3] V. 4. **If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white, then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days,** keep him from intercourse with other people in order to see whether there would be decisive indications pointing to true leprosy. V. 5. **And the priest shall look on him the seventh day; and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin,** if the spot has not grown larger nor affected the surrounding parts, **then the priest shall shut him up seven days more.** V. 6. **And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day; and, behold, if the plague be somewhat dark,** if the skin on the spot has regained its normal color, **and the plague spread not in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is but a scab,** a harmless eruption of the skin; **and he shall wash his clothes and be clean,** for the mere suspicion has brought a taint upon that person, which would be removed by observing the precepts of cleanliness. V. 7. **But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen of the priest again;** this may refer either to the second examination or to a new process made necessary by a subsequent spread of the eruption; v. 8. **and if the priest see that, behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a leprosy.** V. 9. **When the plague of leprosy is in a man,** when the preliminary stages have been ignored and the disease has reached the ulceration stage without an examination by a priest, **then he shall be brought unto the priest;** v. 10. **and the priest shall see him; and, behold, if the rising be white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and there be quick raw flesh in the rising,** the sores having opened with the power of the disease, v. 11. **it is an old leprosy,** an incurable form at this stage, **in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean and shall not shut him up,** the case being so clear; **for he is unclean.** V. 12. **And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh,** and as deeply as his eyes can penetrate, v. 13. **then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he**

3) See articles on the sickness in Bible dictionaries and the recent medical monographs, especially as to the probable cure.

shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague, the eruption; **it is all turned white; he is clean.** It seems that the suspected person, in this instance, either had only a harmless skin disease, or the eruption of all the poisonous matter in the body at one time was the crisis and cleansed the blood and tissues from all impurities. V. 14. **But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean.** V. 15. **And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean; for the raw flesh is unclean,** the open sore indicated that the germs of the sickness were still present in the person; **it is a leprosy.** V. 16. **Or if the raw flesh turn again, and be changed unto white, he shall come unto the priest;** v. 17. **and the priest shall see him; and, behold, if the plague be turned into white,** the ulceration being due to some other cause and having healed with a white covering, or scab, **then the priest shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague,** the spot or sore; **he is clean.** V. 18. **The flesh also, in which, even in the skin thereof, was a boil,** ulcer, or abscess, **and is healed,** v. 19. **and in the place of the boil there be a white rising, or a bright spot, white, and somewhat reddish,** a whitish-red blotch, **and it be showed to the priest;** v. 20. **and if, when the priest seeth it, behold, it be in sight lower than the skin, and the hair thereof be turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a plague of leprosy broken out of the boil.** These indications, if clear, settled the matter. V. 21. **But if the priest look on it, and, behold, there be no white hairs therein, and if it be not lower than the skin, but be somewhat dark, then the priest shall shut him up seven days;** v. 22. **and if it spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a plague.** V. 23. **But if the bright spot stay in his place and spread not, it is a burning boil,** the scar of a burn or a wound; **and the priest shall pronounce him clean.** V. 24. **Or if there be any flesh, in the skin whereof there is a hot burning,** a scar left from a burn, **and the quick flesh that burneth have a white, bright spot, somewhat reddish, or white,** becoming a swollen, shining spot, v. 25. **then the priest shall look upon it; and, behold, if the hair in the bright spot be turned white, and it be in sight deeper than the skin, it is a leprosy broken out of the burning; wherefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the plague of leprosy.** Such spots favored the development of leprosy, the infection could easily take hold in them. V. 26. **But if the priest look on it, and, behold, there be no white hair in the bright spot, and it be no lower than the other skin, but be somewhat dark, then the priest shall shut him up seven days;** v. 27. **and the priest shall look upon him the seventh day; and if it be spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the plague of leprosy.** V. 28. **And if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not in the skin, but it be somewhat dark, it is a rising of the burning,** a slight elevation due to the scar, **and the priest shall pronounce him clean; for it is an inflammation of the burning.** V. 29. **If a man or woman have a plague,** a spot or sore, **upon the head or the beard,** v. 30. **then the priest shall see the plague; and, behold, if it be in sight deeper than the skin, and there be in it a yellow thin hair,** the natural hair being replaced with thin hair of a golden sheen, **then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a dry scall,** a malicious scurf, **even a leprosy upon the head or beard.** V. 31. **And if the priest look on the plague of the scall, and, behold, it be not in sight deeper than the skin, and that there is no black hair in it,** this being an indication that it was a harmless skin eruption, **then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague of the scall seven days;** v. 32. **and in the seventh day the priest shall look on the plague; and, behold, if the scall spread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the scall be not in sight deeper than the skin,** v. 33. **he shall be shaven, but the scall shall he not shave,** this being reserved for further observation; **and the priest shall shut up him that hath the scall seven days more;** v. 34. **and in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall; and, behold, if the scall be not spread in the skin, nor be in sight deeper than the skin,** the sore being neither deep-seated nor virulent, **then the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes and be clean.** V. 35. **But if the scall spread much in the skin after his cleansing,** if after the priest's examination the sore causes trouble, v. 36. **then the priest shall look on him; and, behold, if the scall be spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for yellow hair,** there being enough symptoms for a definite diagnosis; **he is unclean.** V. 37. **But if the scall be in his sight,** so far as he can judge upon a careful examination, **at a stay, and that there is black hair grown up therein, the scall is healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.** V. 38. **If a man also or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots, even white bright spots,** v. 39. **then the priest shall look; and, behold, if the bright spots in the skin of their flesh be darkish white,** without the luster peculiar to an inner swelling and inflammation, **it is a freckled spot that groweth in the skin; he is clean.** "It is an eruption on the skin, appearing in somewhat elevated spots or rings of unequal sizes and a pale-white color, which do not change the hair; it causes no inconven-

ience, and lasts from two months to two years." (Keil.) V. 40. **And the man whose hair is fallen off his head, he is bald; yet is he clean.** This is spoken of cases in which the hair begins to fall out at the crown. V. 41. **And he that hath his hair fallen off from the part of his head toward his face, in the front,** beginning above the temples, **he is forehead-bald; yet is he clean.** V. 42. **And if there be in the bald head or bald forehead a white, reddish sore, it is a leprosy sprung up in his bald head or his bald forehead.** Baldness did not render unclean, but leprosy might develop on the bare skin of the head as well as on the body. V. 43. **Then the priest shall look upon it; and, behold, if the rising of the sore be white reddish in his bald head or in his bald forehead, as the leprosy appeareth in the skin of the flesh,** v. 44. **he is a leprous man, he is unclean; the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head,** the ulcer of leprosy is developing on his head. V. 45. **And the leper in whom the plague is,** every person that has been pronounced a leper by the priest, **his clothes shall be rent,** as a mark of great mourning and affliction, **and his head bare,** uncovered and unkempt, **and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip** to hide his usually hideous aspect, Ezek. 24, 17. 22, **and shall cry, Unclean, unclean!** as a warning to passers-by. V. 46. **All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled,** the Law thus, with all its strictness, taking into consideration a possible recovery of the leper; **he is unclean; he shall dwell alone,** in order to avoid contact with healthy people; **without the camp shall his habitation be.** Cp. Num. 5, 2—4; 12, 14. 15; 2 Kings 15, 5; Luke 17, 12. In Palestine the lepers lived outside the city walls, but they were permitted to attend the synagogs in a place set apart for them, the Law demanding, however, that they come after the opening of services and leave in such a way as not to come in contact with healthy persons. V. 47. **The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in,** probably such as were contaminated by contact with a leprous person, **whether it be a woolen garment or a linen garment,** these two being the common materials used for woven clothes; v. 48. **whether it be in the warp or woof,** no matter which part of the cloth would first show the infection; **of linen or of woolen; whether in a skin or in anything made of skin,** in cloaks, mantles, or receptacles for liquids; v. 49. **and if the plague be greenish or reddish in the garment,** whether the mold indicating the presence of the disease have the one color or the other, **or in the skin, either in the warp or in the woof,** even in unfinished garments and cloth, **or in anything of skin,** in any vessel made of leather, — **it is a plague of leprosy and shall be showed unto the priest;** v. 50. **and the priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days.** V. 51. **And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day. If the plague,** the infected spot, **be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin, the plague is a fretting leprosy,** a corroding infection; **it is unclean.** V. 52. **He shall therefore burn that garment, whether warp or woof, in woolen or in linen, or anything of skin, wherein the plague is; for it is a fretting leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire,** that being the most effective way of removing all danger of infection. V. 53. **And if the priest shall look, and, behold, the plague be not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin,** v. 54. **then the priest shall command that they,** the owners, **wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up seven days more;** v. 55. **and the priest shall look on the plague after that it is washed; and, behold, if the plague have not changed his color, and the plague be not spread, it is unclean; thou shalt burn it in the fire; it is fret inward, whether it be bare within or without.** The terms in the Hebrew are here used in the same way as those concerning baldness in human beings. Whether the right or the wrong side of the cloth still showed the mark or spot distinctly, the garment was to be condemned. V. 56. **And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague be somewhat dark after the washing of it,** the spot less distinct than before the cloth was washed, **then he shall rend it out of the garment or out of the skin or out of the warp or out of the woof.** It was a matter of wise precaution to remove the suspected spot. V. 57. **And if it appear still in the garment,** if the same kind of mold reappeared, **either in the warp or in the woof or in anything of skin, it is a spreading plague; thou shalt burn that wherein the plague is with fire.** V. 58. **And the garment, either warp or woof, or whatsoever thing of skin it be, which thou shalt wash, if the plague be departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time and shall be clean.** V. 59. **This is the law of the plague of leprosy in a garment of woolen or linen, either in the warp or woof or anything of skins, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.** These were wise sanitary precautions which were here embodied in the Ceremonial Law. The Lord, in His theocratic government, did not ignore the needs of the body.

CHAPTER 14.

The Cleansing from Leprosy.

The Manner Observed in Purifying a Leper. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing,** when he is found cured of the terrible disease with which he had been suffering: **He shall be brought unto the priest;** v. 3. **and the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper,** literally, healed away from, that is, healed and gone away from, a careful inspection showing that all symptoms and marks of the disease have disappeared; v. 4. **then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop.** The purpose was to make the person that had been sick Levitically clean. The living birds signified that the leper's dead flesh, the body that was all but dead, was restored to life and vigor; the cedar-wood denoted restoration from evil-smelling rotting of the tissues and the endurance of life; the scarlet (wool or thread or a bit of cloth), restoration of the color of health and freshness to the skin; the fragrant hyssop, the restoration from the exceedingly bad odor of the disease and the purity of life which was now to be expected of the patient. V. 5. **And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel,** which could afterward be destroyed, **over running water,** the vessel having been partly filled with water from a spring or brook. V. 6. **As for the living bird,** which yet remained, **he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water,** so that the mixture of water and blood would cling to the feathers of the bird and to the other objects; v. 7. **and he** (the priest) **shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times,** as on similar occasions of peculiar solemnity, **and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.** This signified that the former leper was released from the fetters of his sickness and could once more return to the enjoyment of full social and religious fellowship with the other people of his nation. V. 8. **And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, on his whole body, and wash himself in water that he may be clean; and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.** "This remaining restriction seems designed still further to impress upon the mind the fearful character of the disease from which the leper had recovered; and still more, to postpone the full restoration of the leper to his family until he had first, by the prescribed sacrifices, been restored to fellowship with God." (Lange.) V. 9. **But it shall be on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off,** for a second thorough cleansing; **and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean,** restored to full Levitical purity. He was now in a condition to offer the prescribed sacrifices of the eighth day. V. 10. **And on the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three-tenth deals of fine flour for a meat-offering,** one-tenth of an epha (about two and one half quarts) being figured for each sacrificial animal, **mingled with oil, and one log** (about seven-tenths of a pint) **of oil.** V. 11. **And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things,** all the prescribed sacrifices, **before the Lord, at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation;** v. 12. **and the priest shall take one he-lamb, and offer him for a trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord,** this ceremony distinguishing the leper's sacrifice from others of the same kind and serving for the worshiper's consecration; v. 13. **and he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin-offering and the burnt offering, in the Holy Place,** north of the altar of burnt offering; **for as the sin-offering is the priest's, so is the trespass-offering; it is most holy.** V. 14. **And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip,** or lobe, **of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot,** to consecrate the organs of the hearing of the Word, of doing the will of the Lord, and of walking in the path of His commandments, as in the consecration of the priests. V. 15. **And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand;** v. 16. **and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord,** before the altar in the court: v. 17. **and of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass-offering** which he had just applied in the same manner; v. 18. **and the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be**

cleansed, to restore him to the privilege of his priestly kingship, from which he had been excluded by his disease; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord. Thus was the propitiation made and the gulf which had existed between God and man bridged over and covered. V. 19. **And the priest shall offer the sin-offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness,** for the leprosy was only the outward expression of the inner impurity of sin; **and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering,** the ewe lamb which had been provided. V. 20. **And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat-offering upon the altar; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.** All this was but a shadow and figure of the sacrifices of good works in which the believers of the New Testament are diligent. V. 21. **And if he be poor and cannot get so much, then he shall take one lamb for a trespass-offering to be waved,** instead of the two animals which the more well-to-do were expected to bring, **to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour** (about two and one half quarts), **mingled with oil for a meat-offering, and a log of oil** (about seven-tenths of a pint); v. 22. **and two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get,** as he can afford, according to his means; **and the one shall be a sin-offering and the other a burnt offering.** V. 23. **And he shall bring them on the eighth day,** after the first ceremony of washing or lustration, vv. 4—8, **for his cleansing unto the priest, unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, before the Lord.** V. 24. **And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass-offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord,** to distinguish the leper's offering from the ordinary sacrifices of the same kind and to symbolize his renewed consecration to the Lord. V. 25. **And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass-offering; and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot;** v. 26. **and the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand;** v. 27. **and the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the Lord;** v. 28. **and the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass-offering;** v. 29. **and the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the Lord,** as before, vv. 16—18, and with the same significance. V. 30. **And he shall offer the one of the turtle-doves or of the young pigeons, such as he can get,** v. 31. **even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt offering, with the meat-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed before the Lord.** The necessity of atonement, of propitiation, of bridging the gulf between God and sinful man by means of the sacrifices that prefigured the perfect offering of Christ, is brought out again and again. V. 32. **This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing,** who is actually not in a position to afford the more expensive sacrifices. While cleansing was absolutely necessary, the Lord did not intend to place insuperable obstacles in the way of the person who wished to be restored to full communion with God and full fellowship with the covenant people.

LEPROSY IN A HOUSE. — V. 33. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,** v. 34. **When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession,** which is here definitely foreseen, **and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession,** if it should be found that the Lord had afflicted a house in this way, as a reminder of the fact that not only their bodies, but also their places of habitation should be considered consecrated to the Lord, v. 35. **and he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house,** v. 36. **then the priest shall command that they empty the house,** clear the house by moving all the furniture and utensils out, **before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean,** for all the furniture would be looked upon as unclean if it were still in the house when the sentence of condemnation would be passed upon the structure. **And afterward the priest shall go in to see the house;** v. 37. **and he shall look on the plague,** on the spot or area which seems to be infected, **and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall,** the reference undoubtedly being to fungous growths which partake of the nature of diseases, are often poisonous, and eat into the stones, v. 38. **then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house and shut up the house seven days.** V. 39. **And the priest shall come again the seventh day,** according to the division of time usually observed in ceremonies of this kind, **and shall look; and, behold, if the plague be spread in the walls**

of the house, v. 40. then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, which were affected by the fungous disease, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city. V. 41. And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, to remove all the loose and soft particles of lime or sand from the stones; and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off without the city into an unclean place; v. 42. and they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house. V. 43. And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plastered, the infection thus being not merely on the surface, but indicating a deep-seated trouble, v. 44. then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house, an infection which eats away the substance of the stones; it is unclean. V. 45. And he shall break down the house, that is, the priest shall cause this to be done, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house, all the building materials used in its construction; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place. V. 46. Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even. V. 47. And he that lieth in the house, reclining there for the purpose of eating or sleeping, shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes, not so much on account of the danger of infection as to prevent the contraction of symbolical uncleanness. V. 48. And if the priest shall come in and look upon it, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house after the house was plastered, after the removal of the infected stones, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. V. 49. And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop; v. 50. and he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; v. 51. and he shall take the cedar-wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, the blood being mixed with the water in the earthen vessel, and sprinkle the house seven times. V. 52. And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet; v. 53. but he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house, as a structure infected with the uncleanness of sin, as it appeared in the fungous growth on the walls; and it shall be clean. The rite thus was exactly the same as that used for the leper without the camp, vv. 4—7, and the house was restored from its taint to its proper relations and purposes. V. 54. This is the law for all manner of plague of leprosy, and scall, scab or scurf, v. 55. and for the leprosy of a garment, and of a house, v. 56. and for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot, v. 57. to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean; this is the law of leprosy, as it is contained in these two chapters.

CHAPTER 15.

Special Forms of Uncleanness and Their Cleansing.

IN THE CASE OF MEN. — V. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying, v. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, either a catarrhal affection of the urethra or a latent flowing of semen with a continuous discharge, because of his issue he is unclean, Levitically impure. V. 3. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue, that is, whether the matter flows without stopping, or whether it is sometimes temporarily retained, it is his uncleanness. V. 4. Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the issue is unclean; and everything, every piece of furniture, whereon he sitteth shall be unclean. V. 5. And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. V. 6. And he that sitteth on anything whereon he sat that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. V. 7. And he that toucheth the flesh, that is, the body, of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. V. 8. And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean, as might inadvertently happen, then he (the clean person) shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. V. 9. And what saddle soever, wagon or seat of a wagon, he rideth upon that hath the issue shall be unclean. V. 10. And whosoever toucheth anything that was under him, any garment, saddle, or vessel upon which

the unclean person lay or sat, **shall be unclean until the even; and he that beareth any of those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.** V. 11. **And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue, and hath not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.** The washing of the hands prevented the communication of the uncleanness on the part of the person suffering with the issue, for the uncleanness was of a symbolical character. V. 12. **And the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath the issue shall be broken; and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.** V. 13. **And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue,** when the flow has stopped, **then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing,** to be sure that a recurrence of the trouble was excluded, **and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh,** his body, **in running water, and shall be clean.** V. 14. **And on the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle-doves or two young pigeons,** offerings of the humblest kind indeed, but serving just the same for the purpose of upholding the relation between God and the sinner, **and come before the Lord unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and give them unto the priest;** v. 15. **and the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord for his issue.** On account of the uncleanness there had existed an estrangement between God and the afflicted person, and this was now removed by the sacrifice of faith. V. 16. **And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him,** inadvertently, during sleep, **then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even.** V. 17. **And every garment and every skin whereon is the seed of copulation shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even.** The law seems to refer to involuntary emissions only, but its provisions naturally would serve to check the terrible sin of self-pollution. V. 18. **The woman also with whom man shall lie,** in the chief relation peculiar to the marital estate, **with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even.** This law must have acted as a very effective check upon mere sensual passions. Cp. Ex. 19, 15; 1 Sam. 21, 5. 6; 2 Sam. 11, 4. "This defilement is connected with the general sinful condition of man, and did not pertain to his original state."

IN THE CASE OF WOMEN. — V. 19. **And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood,** the regular menstrual flow, **she shall be put apart seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even;** every form of contact, even if it was ever so slight, rendered unclean for the day. V. 20. **And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean; everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean;** beds and chairs and every other article of furniture upon which she rested were here included. V. 21. **And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even,** having become Levitically defiled by the mere outward contact. V. 22. **And whosoever toucheth anything that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.** V. 23. **And if it,** any of the menstrual discharge, **be on her bed, or on anything whereon she sitteth, when he,** any person, **toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even.** V. 24. **And if any man lie with her at all,** in the specific marital relation, **and her flowers,** some of the discharge, **be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean;** he will enter into the condition of her Levitical uncleanness. V. 25. **And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation,** beyond the normal limit of seven days, as in the case of the woman whom Jesus healed, Matt. 9, 20—22, **or if it run beyond the time of her separation, all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation; she shall be unclean;** during that whole period she was to be regarded as being in the uncleanness of menstruation. V. 26. **Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation; and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.** V. 27. **And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.** V. 28. **But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days,** as in the case of the man, v. 13. **and after that she shall be clean.** V. 29. **And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles,** the wild turtle-doves, **or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** V. 30. **And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the Lord for the issue of her uncleanness.** While ordinary menstruation required no sacrifice, this abnormal flow, being an uncleanness which estranged from God, made an offering of atonement necessary, for the Lord wanted external, physical purity as a mark and expression of internal cleanness in all the members of His people. V. 31. **Thus**

shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, set them apart as people consecrated to the Lord, that they die not in their uncleanness when they defile My Tabernacle that is among them. The measures here ordered were not merely sanitary, but they also regulated sexual life among the Israelites, besides being typical of the perfect purity which the Lord expects from all His children at all times. V. 32. **This is the law of him that hath an issue, and of him whose seed goeth from him and is defiled therewith,** v. 33. **and of her that is sick of her flowers,** with the menstrual flow, **and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her that is unclean.** Christian spouses will keep in mind at all times that they know how to possess their organs and vessels in sanctification and honor, not in the loathsome lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles that know not God, 1 Thess. 4, 4. 5.

CHAPTER 16.

The Sacrifices of the Great Day of Atonement.

Aaron's Sacrifices for Himself. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord and died,** their unauthorized act bringing down upon them the destroying wrath of God, chap. 10, 1. 2. V. 2. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron, thy brother, that he come not at all times,** at any time that he might choose, **into the Holy Place within the veil,** into the Most Holy Place, **before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark,** the cover, or lid, of the chest which contained the tables of the covenant, **that he die not; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat.** That was the place appointed for the peculiar manifestation of God in the glory of His mercy, Ex. 25, 22; for this cloud revealed the presence of God to the representatives of the people. To step into this place of highest consecration in an arbitrary way, without the special direction of God, would result in death to the offender. V. 3. **Thus shall Aaron come into the Holy Place,** into the innermost section of the Tabernacle: **with a young bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt offering.** These were the sacrificial offerings for the faults of the high priest and for those of the entire priesthood. V. 4. **He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen miter,** the turbanlike head-dress, **shall he be attired; these are the holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.** These white garments were reserved for the special ceremonies of this day, whereas upon other occasions the high priest appeared in his variegated dress, Ex. 28. The white color indicated that no unclean person, no sinner, should step into the presence of the holy God. V. 5. **And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel,** as the joint offering of the entire people, and therefore supplied by them, **two kids of the goats for a sin-offering and one ram for a burnt offering.** Although the ritual dealt with the two young goats in an entirely different manner, yet they both together constituted a single sin-offering. Thus the sacrificial victims both for the priesthood and for the congregation were provided. V. 6. **And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself and for his house,** the term here apparently including not only the immediate family of the high priest, but the whole order of priests. Since all the priests were representatives and mediators of the people in their dealings with the Lord, it was necessary that their own sin, first of all, be covered and expiated in the sight of God. V. 7. **And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** formally set them forth in their character as sacrificial animals, before the face of the Lord. According to Jewish tradition the two goats were of the same size and otherwise as identical as possible in their markings. V. 8. **And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats,** the lots being drawn from an urn by some attendant; **one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat,** or *Azazel*, as the Hebrew has it, for the "Remover of Sin."[4] Both he-goats bore the sins of the people, the one through the act of sacrifice, the other by complete removal into the wilderness. V. 9. **And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin-offering,** in the manner prescribed for such sacrifices. V. 10. **But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat,** to symbolize the complete removal of all transgression and iniquity, **shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.** So much for the preparation for the sacrifices. V. 11. **And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself and for his house,** for the entire priesthood, **and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself.** This was

4) Cp. *Theol. Quart.*, 24 (1920), 10 ff.

the first stage of the day's sacrifices. V. 12. **And he shall take a censer,** a pan or vessel, **full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord,** from the altar of burnt offering, **and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small,** the form in which its perfume would be strongest, **and bring it within the veil,** into the Most Holy Place; v. 13. **and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense** arising from its burning in the censer **may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony,** that covers the tables of the testimony, **that he die not.** The cloud of incense protected the high priest, a sinful human being as he was, from the angry glance of the holy God. V. 14. **And he shall take of the blood of the bullock,** which had been caught up by some attendant and meanwhile kept from coagulating by constant stirring, **and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward,** on the side which faced the east; **and before the mercy-seat,** between the ark and the veil, **shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.** This was the second stage of the special sacrifices of the day, whereby the atonement for the priesthood was completed. The atonement was made, not without blood, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and for the high priest and his house first, Heb. 5, 1—3; 9, 7.

THE OFFERINGS FOR THE PEOPLE. — V. 15. **Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people,** the slaying taking place, of course, outside in the court, **and bring his blood within the veil,** into the Most Holy Place, **and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat;** v. 16. **and he shall make an atonement for the Holy Place,** the Sanctuary itself being in need of cleansing, **because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins,** for it was exposed to defilement in the midst of a sinful people; **and so shall he do for the Tabernacle of the Congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.** Thus both the sins of the priests, with which they had contaminated the Sanctuary, and the transgressions of the people, which also defiled the habitation of God in their midst, had to be expiated on the great Day of Atonement. V. 17. **And there shall be no man in the Tabernacle of the Congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the Holy Place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household,** for the entire priesthood, **and for all the congregation of Israel.** Everything and every person that was defiled had to be kept away from the Most Holy Place during this most solemn part of the ceremony, and the entire responsibility rested upon the high priest alone. While all the members of the congregation were, on this day, to feel the damnable nature of sin, the high priest was to be particularly conscious of this fact, since he acted in the name of all the children of Israel. V. 18. **And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord,** to the altar of incense, **and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.** So the blood of both kinds of sin-offering was mingled in the expiatory rite, the faults of both the priests and the people being atoned for in the sight of God by this third stage of the day's sacrificial ceremonies. Note that even the altar, as an instrument used for purposes of purification and atonement, had to be cleansed of the defilement clinging to it by reason of the worship of sinners. V. 19. **And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.** The ceremonies of the great Day of Atonement were largely Messianic types. Christ is the true High Priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, Heb. 7, 26. By His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. 9, 12. V. 20. **And when he hath made an end of reconciling the Holy Place and the Tabernacle of the Congregation and the altar, he shall bring the live goat,** the second animal of the sin-offering. V. 21. **And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat,** not only one, as in the ordinary sacrifices, **and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel,** individually and collectively, **and all their transgressions in all their sins,** all the misdeeds and trespasses which brought upon them the wrath of Jehovah, **putting them upon the head of the goat,** the "remover of sins," **and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness,** one who stood ready to go upon the instant, without loss of time; v. 22. **and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited,** into a desert and desolate place, for complete removal; **and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.** Thus the fourth part of the special ceremonies of the day was brought to a close. V. 23. **And Aaron shall come into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there,** since they were used only in the rite of atonement on this one day in the year; v. 24. **and he shall wash his flesh with water in the Holy Place,** where the ablutions of the priests were ordinarily performed, at the laver near the entrance of the Tabernacle, **and put on his garments,** the ordinary vestments of his office made of the fine

variegated cloth, **and come forth, and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people,** in either case a ram, **and make an atonement for himself and for the people.** V. 25. **And the fat of the sin-offering shall he burn upon the altar.** All this could be done only after the defilement of sin had been entirely removed. V. 26. **And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat,** for the complete removal of the sin placed upon his head, **shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp,** thus also cleansing himself of the impurity of contact with the sin-offering. V. 27. **And the bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins and their flesh and their dung.** V. 28. **And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.** He also had to be cleansed from the contamination which came to him by touching the sin-offering. The second goat is also a type of Christ, who is the true "Remover of Sin." The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, Is. 53, 6, and He not only bore them, but He took them away, John 1, 29, removed them so completely that their guilt no longer rests upon us. Thus Christ has earned an eternal redemption for us.

THE PURPOSE OF THE DAY. — V. 29. **And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls,** bowed down in penitence and humiliation, **and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you.** The tenth day of the first month of the civil year, known first as Ethanim, and afterwards as Tishri, although not included in the great festivals, was yet of such importance as to give it the name of being the most solemn day in the year, and it was often designated simply as "the day." V. 30. **For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.** V. 31. **It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you,** be regarded in every way as a true Sabbath, **and ye shall afflict your souls,** by fasting, as an expression of the deepest humiliation and shame, **by a statute forever.** V. 32. **And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead,** the intimation being that the high-priestly office was hereditary, **shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments,** those especially set aside for the service of this day; v. 33. **and he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary,** the Most Holy Place, **and he shall make an atonement for the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the Holy Place, **and for the altar,** the golden altar of incense, **and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.** V. 34. **And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he,** Aaron, **did as the Lord commanded Moses.** When the time came, this festival day was duly kept and all the ceremonies carried out in accordance with the will of the Lord. By reason of their symbolism and through the faith of the true Israelites the rites of the great Day of Atonement had power and efficacy until Christ made His great sacrifice, with its eternal power.

CHAPTER 17.

Warning against Desecration of Sacrifices.

ANIMALS TO BE SLAIN BY PRIESTS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them: This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, saying,** v. 3. **What man soever there be of the house of Israel that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat,** the most common sacrificial animals, **in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp,** even if the underlying thought be merely that of slaughtering the animal for food, v. 4. **and bringeth it not unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation to offer an offering unto the Lord before the Tabernacle of the Lord,** in some form of peace-offering, **blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood,** he would be considered guilty of slaughtering an animal without authorization; **and that man shall be cut off from among his people,** expelled from the congregation of the Lord; v. 5. **to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices,** all the clean animals slaughtered for food, **which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the Lord, unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace-offerings unto the Lord.** As a voluntary sacrifice the flesh of these animals could then be eaten on the same day or on the next, chap. 7, 16. 17. V. 6. **And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savor unto the Lord.** By this provision both the eating of

blood and of the loose fat of the abdominal cavity, which was expressly forbidden, chap. 7, 23—26, was made practically impossible. V. 7. **And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a-whoring.** The idols referred to are demons commonly pictured as he-goats, of which the Egyptians especially believed that they lived in the wilderness. By slaughtering animals in their honor superstitious people thought they could prevent evil influences. It seems that the Egyptian custom had found lodgment among the children of Israel, at least to some extent, and the Lord wanted this form of idolatry eradicated. **This shall be a statute forever unto them throughout their generations.** V. 8. **And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice,** in the foolish or insolent presumption that he had the right to worship the Lord anywhere, v. 9. **and bringeth it not unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation to offer it unto the Lord,** in line with the ordinances which He had set forth, **even that man shall be cut off from among his people.** This command was to quench all tendencies of the people to choose their own places of worship, as was later done so widely. Israel had its law of sacrifices, and the Lord wanted this law to be observed in all its details. It is true for all times that not only gross idolatry, but also all self-chosen worship is an abomination unto the Lord and cuts off the wilful transgressor from fellowship with the Lord.

EATING OF BLOOD FORBIDDEN. — V. 10. **And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set My face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.** Cp. 7, 27. The Lord Himself threatens to be the executor in this case, for the transgression of this law was inconsistent with membership among the holy people of God. V. 11. **For the life of the flesh is in the blood,** is carried by the blood; **and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.** Since the blood was the bearer of the soul of the sacrificial animal, therefore the Lord had ordered it to be used as the means of expiation for the souls of men and had forbidden its use for food. V. 12. **Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.** V. 13. **And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten,** those that had been declared unclean being, of course, excepted, chap. 11, **he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust,** to prevent any desecration of the blood as the means of the expiation and atonement for sins. V. 14. **For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is the life thereof. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof; whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.** He that ate blood or permitted dogs or other animals to eat blood which he had shed, desecrated that which the Lord had set apart as consecrated to Himself, and thus became guilty. V. 15. **And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts, whether it be one of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even; then shall he be clean.** Cp. chap. 22, 8; Ex. 22, 31. V. 16. **But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.** He that ate of such food was polluted, and he that touched it was defiled. The Lord's intention was to have the inner purity of the heart symbolized by a strict outward Levitical cleanness, just as He expects the Christians to give evidence of their regenerated hearts in the sanctity of their lives.

CHAPTER 18.

Purity in Sexual Life Demanded.

UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, I am the Lord, your God.** Because the Lawgiver was Jehovah God, the covenant God, therefore the observance of these laws was a matter of covenant obligation. V. 3. **After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do, and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.** The children of Israel were absolutely to avoid all practises, whether they were of Egyptian or Canaanitish origin, which desecrated the marriage relation or showed immorality in any form. The propagation of the human race is to take place in lawful wedlock only, and unlawful marriages, illegal sexual intercourse, and degenerate lusts are an abomination to the Lord. V. 4. **Ye shall do My judgments and keep Mine ordinances to walk therein; I am the Lord, your God.** His authority, as the only true

God, was absolute. V. 5. **Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments,** both those precepts which concerned them only, as the people of the Lord in a peculiar sense, and the ordinances which were natural laws, and which all men should recognize as binding upon them, also the Egyptians and Canaanites; **which if a man do, he shall live in them,** for a perfect keeping of the Law will have the enjoyment of eternal life as its reward, Luke 10, 28; **I am the Lord.** V. 6. **None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness; I am the Lord.** The literal translation is: "Any man at all, to any flesh of his flesh shall he not come near to uncover shame." That is the fundamental rule: Sexual intercourse, the peculiar relation which is characteristic of the married state and is absolutely prohibited outside of holy wedlock, should not take place within the second degree of relationship, whether by blood (consanguinity) or by marriage (affinity).[5] V. 7. **The nakedness of thy father or the nakedness of thy mother shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.** This refers to a man's own, natural mother. V. 8. **The nakedness of thy father's wife,** the stepmother, **thou shalt not uncover; it is thy father's nakedness.** V. 9. **The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father or daughter of thy mother,** that is, the half-sister, **whether she be born at home or born abroad,** that is, in a former marriage, **even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.** V. 10. **The nakedness of thy son's daughter or of thy daughter's daughter,** of the granddaughter, **even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover; for theirs is thine own nakedness,** intercourse with them would be equivalent to violation of the offender's own flesh. V. 11. **The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father,** the daughter of a man's stepmother and his natural father, his half-sister by a second marriage: **she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.** V. 12. **Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister,** that is, his full sister, the man's aunt; **she is thy father's near kinswoman,** by blood-relationship. V. 13. **Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister; for she is thy mother's near kinswoman.** V. 14. **Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother,** of an uncle by blood-relationship; **thou shalt not approach to his wife; she is thine aunt.** This has been looked upon as an extension of the general rule, but since husband and wife are looked upon as one flesh, the principle will apply also in this case, where the honor of the uncle would be violated by intercourse. V. 15. **Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter-in-law; she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.** V. 16. **Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife,** of the sister-in-law; **it is thy brother's nakedness.** This prohibition was intended only for such cases in which the brother had left children; for if the brother died childless, the so-called levirate marriage was ordered, Deut. 25, 5—10. V. 17. **Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter,** who in this event would become the stepdaughter, either at the same time or in successive marriages; **neither shalt thou take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter,** the step-granddaughter, **to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen; it is wickedness.** V. 18. **Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister,** one wife to another, in the relationship known as bigamy, **to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her lifetime.** Any violation of the original rule of God, which provided for only one man and one woman in holy wedlock, is bound to result in disagreeable features, even if the Lord did consent to such marriages in the Old Testament. V. 19. **Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness,** for carnal intercourse, **as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness,** whether during the menstrual period, or during a prolonged flow, or during the weeks of uncleanness after childbirth. V. 20. **Moreover, thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbor's wife,** as spoken of chap. 15, 18, in the sin of adultery, **to defile thyself with her,** for this was a transgression which was to be punished by stoning both the man and the woman, chap. 20, 12; Deut. 22, 22; John 8, 5. Thus the Lord regulated the sexual life of the children of Israel.

UNNATURAL LUSTS. — V. 21. **And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech,** an ancient Canaanitish idol in the form of a hollow statue with the head of an ox, in whose worship such bestial practises of sacrificing children, in an excess of cruelty, were common; **neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God,** as would certainly happen through participation in such abominations. **I am the Lord.** V. 22. **Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, in the sin known as sodomy or as pederasty; it is abomination.** V. 23. **Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto,** to permit carnal intercourse; **it is confusion,** a most abominable and revolting defilement. V. 24. **Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things,** in these bestial perversions of

5) Cp. *Theol. Quart.*, 7 (1903), 86—92; 4 (1900), 319; *Syn.-Ber.*, Mich. Dist., 1897, 51—63; *Lehre und Wehre*, 1906. Jan. and Feb.

sexual desire; **for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you;** v. 25. **and the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.** The story of Sodom shows to what extent unnatural vices were practised by the inhabitants of Canaan, to a degree that nature itself could no longer endure them. V. 26. **Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you** ("The land which the ancestors of Israel were not allowed to possess because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full, Gen. 15, 16, had now become filled with a mass of festering moral corruption. Its inhabitants were to be cast out and the holy people planted in their stead. It could not be allowed that 'the stranger' should again introduce the pollutions which were now being so severely punished." Lange), v. 27. **(for all these abominations have the men of the land done which were before you, and the land is defiled,)** v. 28. **that the land spue not you out also when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you.** The land is personified as a creature which is obliged to vomit forth some form of indigestible food with every indication of revulsion. V. 29. **For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.** V. 30. **Therefore shall ye keep Mine ordinance,** the precept covering this matter based upon natural law, **that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein. I am the Lord, your God,** and the just and holy God cannot endure such customs of abomination, as in those days, so in our times. There is a hint in this chapter which has been sustained abundantly by history, namely, that any relaxation of sexual purity will usually be accompanied by the perversion or denial of some fundamental doctrine.

CHAPTER 19.

A Summary of Various Laws.

CHIEFLY OF THE FIRST TABLE. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I, the Lord, your God, am holy.** They were not only to be pure and sinless, but their entire life was to present a definite and unvarying contrast to sin and transgression in any form. That is the fundamental thought of the chapter. V. 3. **Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.** The mother is here mentioned first, as the children are chiefly dependent upon her and associated with her, especially in the first years of their lives. Reverence to the mother of the home is essential for the proper social relationship, and the importance of this relation is seen from the fact that the family is the unit of civilization. **And keep My Sabbaths,** all the festival days sacred to the Lord. **I am the Lord, your God.** This observance governed the entire social organization of the Jews. V. 4. **Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods. I am the Lord, your God.** "If the heart of man becomes benumbed to the use of images of false gods of any kind, he sinks down to the level of the idols which are his ideals, and becomes as dumb and unspiritual as they are." (Lange.) It is significant that the word here used for idols really means "nothingnesses," thus describing the idols in their true character. Cp. Ps. 96, 5; 115, 8; 135, 18; Is. 40, 18; 44, 10. V. 5. **And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the Lord, ye shall offer it at your** own will. Unless the offerings were made in this spirit, with a right good will, from the heart, they would have no value in the sight of God. V. 6. **It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow,** for that was the rule with regard to voluntary sacrifices, chap. 7, 16; **and if aught remain until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire.** V. 7. **And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted,** the object of the sacrifice was not attained, its purpose was made void by the deliberate disregard of God's rule. V. 8. **Therefore every one that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the Lord,** in eating of flesh which had been devoted to the Lord as a gift after it had become unclean; **and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.** This threat involved excommunication on the part of the congregation and the punishment of death on the part of God, who is a holy, jealous God.

CHIEFLY OF THE SECOND TABLE. — V. 9. **And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field,** to the very edge of the property line, **neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest,** single stalks and ears that dropped when the sheaves were bound. V. 10. **And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard** after the first picking, **neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard,** those that had fallen to the ground during the picking; **thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. I am the Lord, your God.**

Love toward one's neighbor was emphasized again and again as a fundamental requirement of the Law. V. 11. **Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely,** hypocritically, **neither lie one to another,** said of deceit and perfidiousness. Note that falsehood and fraud are enumerated with theft, for the three go together. V. 12. **And ye shall not swear by My name falsely;** true oaths are indeed permitted, those in the interest of one's neighbor, but not false oaths; **neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God,** desecrate it by taking it in vain. **I am the Lord.** V. 13. **Thou shalt not defraud,** oppress, **thy neighbor, neither rob him,** in any manner whatever deprive him of something which is due him; **the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.** The day-laborer was to receive his pay at the end of each day, Deut. 24, 14. 15. V. 14. **Thou shalt not curse the deaf,** the poor man not being able to hear the maledictions and to defend himself, **nor put a stumbling-block before the blind,** to cause him to fall, a decidedly ill-conceived form of practical joke, **but shalt fear thy God,** who both hears and sees, and will avenge the wrong in due time. **I am the Lord.** V. 15. **Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment,** not let personal interests influence you to disregard the demands of justice. **Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor,** take his part from false sympathy, **nor honor the person of the mighty,** with the aim of gaining his favor; **but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.** V. 16. **Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor,** as the false witness often does. **I am the Lord.** This involves, of course, "casting aside all inhumane conduct, all ill will, as manifested in malicious belittling, blackening, and slandering, and especially in attempts against the life of a neighbor, whether in court or in private life." (Lange.) V. 17. **Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart,** not bear him any grudge. **Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor,** frankly and openly tell him his fault in the event of a transgression, as the Lord also bids us do, Matt. 18, 15—17, **and not suffer sin upon him,** that is, not bear a sin on his account by remaining silent, when a remonstrance in time might save one's neighbor from severe transgressions. So even the Israelites, according to this precept, would become partakers of other men's sins. V. 18. **Thou shalt not avenge,** seek and take revenge for a wrong which has been inflicted, **nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people,** Rom. 12, 19, after a wrong has been committed, **but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. I am the Lord.** Cp. Matt. 19, 19; 22, 39. Many of these cases, if not all, are applications of the law of love, and therefore require to be observed by Christians to this day.

VARIOUS STATUTES. — V. 19. **Ye shall keep My statutes,** those special precepts which applied particularly to the conditions under which the Jews lived. **Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind,** for the production of hybrids. **Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed,** for the same reason; **neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woolen come upon thee.** V. 20. **And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman that is a bondmaid,** a slave, **betrothed to an husband,** probably after the manner spoken of Ex. 21, 7—11, **and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her,** these being the two ways in which a slave could gain his liberty; **she shall be scourged,** or rather, there shall be a punishment of both guilty persons; **they shall not be put to death, because she was not free** and could not legally contract marriage. V. 21. **And he,** the guilty man, **shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, even a ram for a trespass-offering.** V. 22. **And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering before the Lord for his sin which he hath done,** in the manner prescribed by God, chap. 7, 1—7; **and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him.** V. 23. **And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food,** fruit-trees and nut-trees, **then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised,** and therefore not to be used; **three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you; it shall not be eaten of.** V. 24. **But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the Lord withal,** hallowed to Jehovah, and fit to be used as an offering of first-fruits. V. 25. **And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof** through the blessing of the Lord. **I am the Lord, your God.** This manner of treating the trees incidentally increased the yield of the orchard. V. 26. **Ye shall not eat anything with the blood,** flesh from which the blood had not thoroughly drained, chap. 17, 10; **neither shall ye use enchantment,** any form of soothsaying, **nor observe times,** another form of witchcraft, that of using the evil eye. V. 27. **Ye shall not round the corners of your heads,** cut or shave the hair in a circle from one temple to the other, **neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard,** crop or trim the ends. This seems to have reference to a custom followed by some heathen nations in honor of certain idols. V. 28. **Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead,** such tattooing and such incisions as the Jews must have seen done among the Egyptians, **nor print any marks upon you,** in the form of pictures, letters, or figures. **I am the**

Lord. V. 29. **Do not prostitute thy daughter,** induce her to permit her body to be used for immoral purposes, **to cause her to be a whore,** a sin which profanes the body in the most specific and emphatic sense, **lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness,** full of abominable deeds. The reference is probably to religious immorality, as it was joined with many idolatrous worships and is to this day, in which women voluntarily abandoned their chastity as priestesses of the idol. V. 30. **Ye shall keep My Sabbaths,** all the prescribed festivals, **and reverence My Sanctuary. I am the Lord.** The entire social and domestic life of the Israelites was to be pervaded by the fear of God and characterized by chasteness and propriety. V. 31. **Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them;** literally: "Do not turn to the spirits of the dead, and after the spirits of soothsaying do not follow." **I am the Lord, your God.** All intercourse with conjurors of the dead and with wizards was equivalent to desecration of the holy relation with God. "The chief means used by both these classes of persons was the consulting with the spirits of the departed. While this furnishes an incidental testimony all along to the belief of the Israelites in the life beyond the grave, it is self-evident that all such attempts to secure knowledge which God has not put in the power of living man to acquire are a resistance to His will, and a chafing against the barriers He has imposed. It is remarkable that such attempts should have been persisted in through all ages and in all lands." (Gardiner.)[6] V. 32. **Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God. I am the Lord.** The respect for old age, coming under the Fourth Commandment, is here associated with the fear of God, who demands this showing of respect. V. 33. **And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex,** that is, oppress, **him,** make him feel that he is an outcast. V. 34. **But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you,** be treated with all kind regard, just as though he were an inhabitant of the land, **and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt,** and the remembrance of the oppression suffered there was to have a wholesome influence in teaching them mercy. **I am the Lord, your God.** V. 35. **Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment,** in any matter that is to be decided in court, **in mete-yard,** in measurements of length, **in weight, or in measure,** both dry and liquid measure being included. V. 36. **Just balances,** for measures of weight, **just weights,** stones used as standards of weight, **a just ephah,** as a standard for dry measure, **and a just hin,** as the standard for liquid measure, **shall ye have. I am the Lord, your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.** It is clear that equity in the affairs of daily life is here made to rest upon the foundation of duty toward God. V. 37. **Therefore shall ye observe all My statutes and all My judgments,** the precepts flowing out of the natural law inscribed in the hearts of all men as well as those given to the Jews in particular, **and do them. I am the Lord.** Love is still the fulfilment of the Law, the advantage which the Christians have consisting chiefly in this, that its application in the individual cases is left to the judgment of the believer, as a spur to his ingenuity.

6) Cp. Graebner, *Spiritism.*

CHAPTER 20.

Punishments for Various Sins.

FOR SINS AGAINST THE SIXTH, SECOND, AND FOURTH COMMANDMENTS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech,** in the double sin of masturbation or onanism and idolatry, or, more likely, in immolating children, chap. 18, 21, **he shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.** The offender, after the forms of the law had been observed, Deut. 17, 6; 19, 15, was to suffer summary execution by being stoned and literally buried under the thrown stones. V. 3. **And I will set My face against that man,** in case the people should neglect the punishment in due time, **and will cut him off from among his people,** pursue the offender and his followers with His judgment, until He has exterminated all that are associated in his guilt, **because he hath given of his seed unto Molech,** the abomination of the Canaanites, **to defile My Sanctuary, and to profane My holy name.** V. 4. **And if the people of the land do anyways hide their eyes from the man when he giveth of his seed unto Molech,** consecrating it as an act of worship, **and kill him not,** v. 5. **then I will set My face against that man and against his family, and will cut him off and all that go a-whoring after him,** in the double sense of committing an immoral act and of becoming guilty of idolatry, **to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.** As no sacrifice to false gods was permitted in the land, so this special worship of Molech was an abomination which could under no circumstances be tolerated. V. 6. **And the**

soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, after men and women that consult with the spirits of the dead and use other forms of soothsaying, chap. 19, 31, **to go a-whoring after them,** becoming unfaithful to the true God by such idolatrous practises, **I will even set My face against that soul, and I will cut him off from among his people.** Excommunication and death was to be his punishment for engaging in apostasy and for corrupting the people of the Lord. V. 7. **Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord, your God,** and Jehovah God, Himself the absolutely sinless and pure personality, wanted His people not only to abstain from sin, but also to abhor sin with an undying enmity. V. 8. **And ye shall keep My statutes and do them. I am the Lord which sanctify you.** By training them to observe the ordinances of His holy will God was consecrating them to be a holy people in His service. V. 9. **For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death; he hath cursed his father or his mother,** the representatives of God in the home, in the family; **his blood shall be upon him.** This shows the emphasis which the Lord at all times placed upon the honor of parents and the keeping of the Fourth Commandment.

FOR UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES. — V. 10. **And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife,** who, according to chap. 18, 20, is restricted to her husband, so far as sexual relations are concerned, 1 Cor. 7, 4. 5, **the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.** V. 11. **And the man that lieth with his father's wife,** with his stepmother, **hath uncovered his father's nakedness. Both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.** V. 12. **And if a man lie with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have wrought confusion,** become guilty of a revolting defilement; **their blood shall be upon them.** V. 13. **If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman,** in the sin of pederasty, **both of them have committed an abomination,** a bestial crime, contrary to nature, a horror; **they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.** V. 14. **And if a man take a wife and her mother,** in revolting incest, **it is wickedness,** a most horrible act, an unheard-of deed of shame; **they shall be burned with fire, both he and they,** after they have been stoned, for thus the abnormality of their crime was emphasized; **that there be no wickedness among you.** In all these cases, both persons are alike guilty, because even the passive part consented to the act, permitted the seduction to take place. In the case of rape the Lord's judgment is different, Deut. 22, 26. 27. V. 15. **And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death; and ye shall slay the beast.** V. 16. **And if a woman approach unto any beast and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman and the beast; they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.** "With the beastly human being the beast itself was also to be destroyed." (Lange.) V. 17. **And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter,** his (older) half-sister, **and see her nakedness and she see his nakedness, it is a wicked thing,** a disgraceful act; **and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people; he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity,** his misdeed. V. 18. **And if a man lie with a woman having her sickness,** her menstrual period, **and shall uncover her nakedness,** knowingly and intentionally, **he hath discovered her fountain,** exposed her life-spring, **and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood; and both of them shall be cut off from among their people.** For the penalty of the unintentional offense, see chap. 15, 24. V. 19. **And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister nor of thy father's sister; for he uncovereth his near kin; they shall bear their iniquity.** This transgression was not punished with death by the government, but the Lord Himself would take their case in hand. V. 20. **And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife,** his aunt by marriage, **he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless.** While the marriage was not annulled, the Lord's punishment was very severe, for childlessness was classed with bereavement in the estimation of the Jews. V. 21. **And if a man shall take his brother's wife,** in any case but that of the levirate marriage, **it is an unclean thing,** calling forth God's curse of the first degree; **he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.** The aim of all these provisions was to purify sexual life among the Hebrews, since the entire nation was consecrated to the Lord as a royal priesthood, Ex. 19, 6. Christians will keep in mind at all times that marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled, Heb. 13, 4.

ADMONITION TO HOLINESS. — V. 22. **Ye shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments,** both general and special, **and do them, that the land whither I bring you to dwell therein spue you not out,** chap. 18, 25. 28. V. 23. **And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you,** the nation of the Canaanites with all its branches; **for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.** This implies that the sins enumerated in the list above were offenses against the natural

law, against the summary of God's will as it was implanted in the hearts of men at the beginning. They were unnatural sins and vices. V. 24. **But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey,** of unusual fruitfulness. **I am the Lord, your God, which have separated you from other people,** to be a peculiar people, and one distinguished in His service. V. 25. **Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean,** observe the distinctions set forth in chapter 11; **and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.** V. 26. **And ye shall be holy unto Me; for I, the Lord, am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be Mine.** "The sacred observance of the laws of food was thus a constant reminder for Israel of its theocratic sanctity and dignity." (Lange.) V. 27. **A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard,** that consults with the spirits of the dead or practises necromancy, **shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them.** In this way every defilement through idolatrous abominations was prevented, and Israel was kept consecrated for the service of the Lord.

CHAPTER 21.

The Holiness of the Priests.

THEIR OUTWARD APPEARANCE AND RELATIONS. V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people** (for a person became unclean not only by touching a dead body, but also by being in the same tent or room with a deceased person, Num. 19, 11. 14) v. 2. **but for his kin that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother,** v. 3. **and for his sister, a virgin,** as long as she is unmarried, **that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled.** After her marriage she belonged to her husband's family, and the intimate ties of relationship were naturally severed. A daughter always retains her affection for her parents, while a married sister is usually estranged from her brother. V. 4. **But he shall not defile himself being a chief among his people, to profane himself;** that is, he was not permitted to become unclean on account of any person related to him by marriage, but only on account of blood-relatives. V. 5. **They shall not make baldness upon their head,** by shaving off the hair, **neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard,** crop or trim the edges, **nor make any cuttings in their flesh,** all these being extreme marks of severe mourning and grief. Cp. chap. 19, 27. 28; Deut. 14, 1. V. 6. **They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God,** as they would do by expressions of passionate grief, which are often equivalent to rebellion against His dispensations; **for the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer,** thus serving Jehovah, drawing near to the Lord who has revealed Himself to His people as the Holy One; **therefore they shall be holy.** V. 7. **They shall not take a wife that is a whore,** a public prostitute, **or profane,** a fallen woman, or one of illegitimate birth; **neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband,** a divorced woman; **for he** (the priest) **is holy unto his God.** The wives of the priests had to be of unblemished and spotless character. V. 8. **Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God,** in the various sacrifices; **he shall be holy unto thee; for I, the Lord, which sanctify you, am holy.** The entire life and surroundings of the priests were to be in harmony with their calling. V. 9. **And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father,** brings disgrace not only upon his person, but also upon his office; **she shall be burned with fire,** after having suffered the punishment of death. V. 10. **And he that is the high priest among his brethren,** selected for that position from among his brethren, the children of Levi, **upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head,** go about with unkempt hair, **nor rend his clothes,** another of the accustomed marks of mourning, a precept which was disregarded by Caiaphas during the trial of Christ, Matt. 26, 65; v. 11. **neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or for his mother,** contact with the dead body of even these nearest relatives being forbidden; v. 12. **neither shall he go out of the Sanctuary,** namely, for the purpose of visiting the home of his relatives at such a time, **nor profane the Sanctuary of his God** by bringing uncleanness upon his person in this manner; **for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him. I am the Lord.** As a high priest of the Lord, set apart for the work of the Sanctuary by the oil of consecration, he was strictly to avoid all contamination, since this would bring disgrace upon Jehovah.

Wives of Priests; Blemishes. —V. 13. **And he shall take a wife in her virginity,** a pure virgin. V. 14. **A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane,** a fallen woman, **or an harlot, these shall he not take,** v. 7. **but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife,** a daughter of Israel. V. 15. **Neither shall he profane his seed among his people** by being joined in wedlock in a way which would not harmonize with the sanctity of his position; **for I, the Lord, do sanctify him.** V. 16. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 17. **Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations,** among all his coming descendants, **that hath any blemish,** any bodily defect, **let him not approach to offer the bread of his God,** the sacrifices in general, for these culminated in the showbread. V. 18. **For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose,** misshapen or slit, **or anything superfluous,** abnormal members of the body, v. 19. **or a man that is broken-footed,** that has broken-down arches, **or broken-handed,** v. 20. **or crookbacked,** one that has a hump, **or a dwarf,** one that is abnormally slender, **or that hath a blemish in his eye,** that is, a white spot conspicuous enough to draw attention, **or be scurvy,** affected with a growth which resembled leprosy, **or scabbed,** with a disfiguring skin-disease, **or hath his stones broken,** affected with a disease of the sexual organs; v. 21. **no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron, the priest, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire; he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God,** he was excluded from the characteristic work of the priesthood. V. 22. **He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy,** chap. 2, 3, **and of the holy,** of the wave-breast and of the heave-shoulder, of first-fruits, tithes, and gifts. This compassionate provision compensated, in a way, for the exclusion of these men from active service in the Sanctuary. V. 23. **Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar,** he shall not discharge the official functions of the high priest or of the priests, **because he hath a blemish; that he profane not My sanctuaries; for I, the Lord, do sanctify them.** V. 24. **And Moses told it unto Aaron and to his sons and unto all the children of Israel;** for the entire congregation was interested in the observance of these ordinances. In the New Testament the congregation of the believers is even more interested in the keeping of God's ordinances, because the discrimination between a special priesthood and a laity no longer exists, and every member is responsible for matters of doctrine and of life

CHAPTER 22.

Further Instructions for the Priests.

Warning against Profanation of Hallowed Things. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto Aaron and to his sons that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not My holy name in those things which they hallow unto Me. I am the Lord.** The priests were not to profane the holy gifts of the people by approaching them at a time when they themselves were in a condition of uncleanness, which made their priestly services unlawful. In these gifts were also included those parts of the sacrifices which the Lord had set aside for maintenance of the priests. V. 3. **Say unto them, Whosoever he be of all your seed among your generations,** of any descendant of Aaron entrusted with priestly functions, **that goeth unto the holy things which the children of Israel hallow unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him,** any form of Levitical defilement, such as were discussed in chaps. 13 to 15, **that soul shall be cut off from My presence,** deprived of his priestly office, and perhaps punished in a more severe manner. **I am the Lord.** V. 4. **What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue,** chap. 15, 2, **he shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean. And whoso toucheth anything that is unclean by the dead,** because of contact with a dead body, **or a man whose seed goeth from him;** v. 5. **or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean,** any one of the lower forms of animal life whose contact defiled a man, **or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath;** v. 6. **the soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even,** according to the general rule, which thus applied to the priests also, **and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.** V. 7. **And when the sun is down,** at the end of the day and at the beginning of the new day, **he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things, because it is his food;** he was dependent upon the priests' share of the offerings for his daily bread and should no longer be deprived of this, after having fasted all day. The divine legislation always shows this considerate character. V. 8. **That which dieth of itself, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith,** for that was forbidden to all

the children of Israel, Ex. 22, 31. **I am the Lord.** V. 9. **They shall therefore keep Mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it and die therefor, if they profane it. I, the Lord, do sanctify them.** Death was the general penalty of a priest's neglect to follow the precepts of the Lord with regard to purity of service in His Sanctuary. Having now stated in what condition a priest was not to eat of things sanctified, the Lord excludes from their share of the sacrifices all those that were not members of the priestly family. V. 10. **There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing; a sojourner of the priest,** any visitor not belonging to his family, to the tribe of Levi, **or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing.** V. 11. **But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house; they shall eat of his meat.** In either case the slave was a member of the priest's family and dependent upon the food which he received for his own maintenance. V. 12. **If the priest's daughter also be married unto a stranger,** to a man not belonging to the priestly family, **she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.** V. 13. **But if the priest's daughter be a widow or divorced,** spurned by her husband, **and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat,** of the food which her father was entitled to as a part of his emoluments as priest; **but there shall no stranger eat thereof.** If the priest's daughter should have children, she formed with her children a household of her own, even if she was widowed or divorced. V. 14. **And if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly,** without intention, without being aware of the fact at the time, **then he shall put the fifth part thereof unto it,** that is, the equivalent of the food which was profaned together with a penalty, **and shall give it unto the priest with the holy thing,** thereby making restitution for the fault. V. 15. **And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel which they offer unto the Lord,** v. 16. **or suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass,** load themselves with the crime of the guilt in permitting such a profanation on the part of unauthorized people, **when they eat their holy things; for I, the Lord, do sanctify them.** So the priests were charged with the supervision of these matters, in order to keep the sanctified things from profanation, just as the pastors of the Christian Church should carry out the function of watchmen in warning the people entrusted to them by the Lord of the Church against all transgressions of God's holy Law.

SOME QUALIFICATIONS OF SACRIFICES. —V. 17. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 18. **Speak unto Aaron and to his sons and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel or of the strangers in Israel that will offer his oblation for all his vows and for all his free-will offerings,** two forms of peace-offerings, chap. 7, 16, **which they will offer unto the Lord for a burnt offering,** v. 19. **ye shall offer at your own will,** for the purpose of gaining the good pleasure of the Lord: **a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats.** The point that the animal offered had to be physically perfect stands out with special emphasis. V. 20. **But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you.** V. 21. **And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the Lord to accomplish his vow,** in payment of some promise made to the Lord, **or a free-will offering in beeves or sheep,** any animal from the flocks, **it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.** V. 22. **Blind or broken,** that is, ruptured, **or maimed,** with some deep incision or wound, **or having a wen,** a festering sore, **or scurvy,** an eruption like leprosy, **or scabbed,** with a putrid skin disease, **ye shall not offer these unto the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord.** V. 23. **Either a bullock or a lamb that hath anything superfluous or lacking in his parts,** members too many or too few, or members and organs of an abnormal shape in either direction, so long as they were not diseased, **that mayest thou offer for a free-will offering,** for in this case an exception was permitted; **but for a vow it shall not be accepted.** V. 24. **Ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut,** for by these four ways was sterility produced in male animals; **neither shall ye make any offering thereof in your land;** the Israelites were not to make such mutilations a practise, for a perfect animal included its fitness for breeding. V. 25. **Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these, because their corruption is in them, and blemishes be in them; they shall not be accepted for you.** We Christians should also keep in mind that it is not whatever remains after we have had our fill which we ought to give to the Lord, but that He expects perfect gifts at our hands. V. 26. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** saying, v. 27. **When a bullock or a sheep or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam,** to get its nourishment from its mother; **and from the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** "The reason for this was that the young animal had not attained to a mature and self-sustained life during the first week of its existence." (Keil.) Animals became admissible for sacrifices at the same age as that when a male child was received into the cove-

nant relationship with God by the sacrament of circumcision. V. 28. **And whether it be cow or ewe, a female from the flock, ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day.** Cp. Ex. 23, 19; Deut. 22, 6. 7. V. 29. **And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, offer it at your own will;** it was essential that the gift be voluntary. V. 30. **On the same day it shall be eaten up; ye shall leave none of it until the morrow. I am the Lord.** Cp. chap. 7, 15; 19, 5. 6. V. 31. **Therefore shall ye keep My commandments and do them. I am the Lord.** V. 32. **Neither shall ye profane My holy name** in any of the ways discussed in this chapter; **but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel,** given that obedience, honor, and reverence which pertains to Him as the one true God. **I am the Lord which hallow you,** v. 33. **that brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord.** Just as the Lord at that time stressed the necessity of cheerful willingness on the part of the worshipers, so the truly good works of the Christians flow from the love of their hearts based upon their faith in their Savior.

CHAPTER 23.

The Feasts of the Lord.

The Sabbath. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts.** The word originally means fixed or appointed times, which the Lord had marked out, separated, distinguished from the ordinary course of daily life, and therefore found its chief application in the case of the festivals. While the chapter contains a calendar of the festivals, its purpose is chiefly, as the restricting relative clause indicates, to mark those festivals upon which there should be solemn meetings for the purpose of worship. V. 3. **Six days shall work be done,** the ordinary business of life should be done on the six days of the week, and the words are not merely a permission, but a command; **but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein.** The Sabbath was to be distinguished not only by the fact that the Jews desisted from work, but chiefly because they assembled for the purposes of worship; **it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.** By the last expression the convocation of the Sabbath is distinguished from that of all the annual festivals, for the Sabbath was usually celebrated at home, in the country, in town, in village, in hamlet, throughout the land, and wherever the Jews lived, while the great festivals were celebrated chiefly, if not entirely, at the places where the Lord's Sanctuary was erected.

The Passover and the Offering which Followed It. — V. 4. **These are the feasts of the Lord,** in the narrower sense, **even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.** This instruction was carried out with strict literalness in after-years, the exact date of the new moon in each month being fixed by the elders of the Jews and announced with great solemnity. V. 5. **In the fourteenth day of the first month,** of the month Abib, or Nisan, with which the church-year began, **at even, is the Lord's Passover.** Cp. Ex. 12, 6—20. V. 6. **And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto the Lord; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.** Although at a later period the two festivals were considered as one, for all practical purposes, and often identified, yet the distinction was observed, and careful writers did not neglect to refer to it, Mark 14, 1. V. 7. **In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation,** a solemn assembly for purposes of worship; **ye shall do no servile work therein.** On this day all business and work was strictly suspended, as on a most solemn Sabbath. V. 8. **But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days,** although these days were not closed to the ordinary work in the house, in the shop, and on the farm. **In the seventh day is an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein,** as on the first day. Of the annual festivals, the Passover, with the Feast of Unleavened Bread connected with it, came first in the cycle of the church-year, first in the great historic event it commemorated, first in its obligation, and first in its spiritual and typical significance. V. 9. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 10. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give unto you,** for it was only at that time that this special instruction was to come into force, **and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest,** a sheaf of barley, which ripens in Palestine in April; v. 11. **and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord,** by which the gift was sanctified to Jehovah, who then designated it for the use of the priests, **to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath,** after the first day of the holy convocation, on the sixteenth of Nisan, **the priest shall wave it.** V. 12. **And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he-lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord.** As Israel, by the offering of the sheaf

of first-fruits, consecrated the entire new harvest and the daily bread depending upon this harvest to the Lord and confessed that its maintenance depended upon the divine goodness, so, by the burnt offering, the people declared their unworthiness of the Lord's goodness and their need of His mercy. V. 13. **And the meat-offering thereof,** to accompany the burnt offering, **shall be two-tenth deals** (somewhat over five quarts) **of fine flour,** wheaten flour, **mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin,** a trifle more than a quart. V. 14. **And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn,** roasted at the fire, **nor green ears,** of the new harvest, **until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings,** in the land of Canaan, as long as the Levitical priesthood endured. The use of the new grain for food in any form whatever before the ceremony of waving on the sixteenth of Nisan was absolutely forbidden. All our possessions, all the members of our bodies, should be consecrated to the Lord for diligence in good works.

THE FEAST OF WEEKS. — V. 15. **And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath,** from the sixteenth of Nisan, **from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths,** or weeks, **shall be complete.** V. 16. **Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord,** one prepared from the grain of the new harvest. V. 17. **Ye shall bring out of your habitations,** not from the Temple revenues, this being an extra offering, **two wave-loaves of two-tenth deals** (a little more than five quarts), bread like that used for daily food. **They shall be of fine flour,** of wheaten flour; **they shall be baken with leaven,** as the bread was always prepared in the homes; **they are the first-fruits unto the Lord.** V. 18. **And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year and one young bullock and two rams; they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat-offering and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savor unto the Lord.** V. 19. **Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings.** "The sin-offering was to excite the feeling and consciousness of sin on the part of the congregation of Israel, that, whilst eating their daily leavened bread, they might not serve the leaven of their old nature, but seek and implore from the Lord, their God, the forgiveness and cleansing away of their sin." (Keil.) V. 20. **And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before the Lord,** the name being derived from the movement of the body and of the arms which accompanied the presentation to the Lord, **with the two lambs; they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest.** Thus the character of the festival, as one of joyful gratitude for God's goodness and mercy, was emphasized. V. 21. **And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day that it may be an holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile work therein,** as on the first and the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; **it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.** V. 22. **And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest,** in mowing to the very border of the land, **neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest,** the stalks and ears that dropped out in harvesting; **thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger. I am the Lord, your God.** To celebrate a festival of thanksgiving to the Lord for the blessings of His goodness and at the same time to ignore the needs of the poor is a combination which will hardly meet with the approval of the Lord.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS. — V. 23. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 24. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.** It was a feast Sabbath, distinguished from the ordinary new moons, and a Sabbath of memorial. The feature of the day was the sounding of the trumpets, horns, or trombones, which belonged to the equipment of the Sanctuary, Num. 10, 2. V. 25. **Ye shall do no servile work therein; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** The day was afterward, if not at that time, celebrated as the New Year's Day of the civil year, and the solemn assembly marked its prominence, as the Jews said, because it commemorated the creation, when all the sons of God shouted for joy, Job 38, 7. The blowing of horns was afterward not confined to the Sanctuary, but was indulged in very generally throughout the land. The burnt offering of the day is specified exactly in Num. 29, 1—6.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. — V. 26. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 27. **Also on the tenth day of this seventh month,** the seventh month of the church-year, known as Tishri, **there shall be a day of atonement; it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls,** show the grief and mourning which you feel on account of your sins by a complete fast, **and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.** Cp. chap. 16. The offerings are specified

in detail Num. 29, 8—11. V. 28. **And ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord, your God,** the annual restoration of the relation between the covenant God and His people by the sprinkling of blood in the Most Holy Place. V. 29. **For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day,** not join the rest of the people in the fasting which showed the intensity of their mourning, **he shall be cut off from among his people.** V. 30. **And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people,** for the strictest form of Sabbath rest was here demanded. V. 31. **Ye shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.** V. 32. **It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls. In the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.** The exact length of the fast is specified, and the great rigor is to be noted with which the penalty of death was held forth for every transgression against the rest of the Sabbath and against the fast. The children of Israel were to be made conscious, at least to some extent, of the heinousness and of the guilt of sin, that they might enter upon the celebration of the Day of Atonement with hearts full of genuine repentance.

The Feast of Tabernacles. — V. 33. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 34. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month,** of the month Tishri, corresponding to the latter part of our September and the first part of our October, **shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord,** named the Feast of Booths on account of the temporary structures in which the children of Israel lived during that week, as described below. V. 35. **On the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein,** as on the other great festivals. V. 36. **Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** in addition to the daily burnt offerings, as described Num. 29, 13—38. **On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; it is a solemn assembly,** concluding the festivities of the week in a manner befitting their importance; **and ye shall do no servile work therein.** V. 37. **These are the feasts of the Lord,** as enumerated in this chapter, **which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations,** this being the feature which is stressed here, **to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat-offering, a sacrifice, and drink-offerings,** the libations of wine, **everything upon his day;** v. 38. **beside the Sabbaths of the Lord, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your free-will offerings which ye give unto the Lord.** V. 39. **Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days,** for the Feast of Tabernacles was the festival of the completed harvest, not only of grain, but also of fruit. **On the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath,** as stated above. V. 40. **And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees,** literally, "fruit of ornamental trees," whose long composite leaves would serve well for purposes of decoration, **branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees,** such with heavy foliage, **and willows of the brook,** all these being used in the construction of booths; **and ye shall rejoice before the Lord, your God, seven days.** Cp. Neh. 8, 15 ff. V. 41. **And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.** V. 42. **Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths,** the strangers being excluded in the ordinance, since the second purpose of the festival was to remind the Israelites of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, v. 43. **that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.** The keynote of the festival, therefore, was joy to the point of exultation, since the contrast between the fulness of the blessings enjoyed in Palestine, as it appeared in every harvest, and the desolation of the wilderness was so marked. Cp. Deut. 8. V. 44. **And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.** The Feast of Tabernacles is probably symbolic of the everlasting festival of joy which we shall celebrate with all the elect in heaven, where our hosannas will rise to the throne of the Lamb in endless refrain.[7])

7) For a full discussion of the Hebrew festivals, see *Syn.-Ber.*, Iowa Dist., 1919.

CHAPTER 24.

Additional Ordinances. Punishment of Blasphemy.

OF THE OIL AND THE SHOWBREAD.—V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Command the children of Israel that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.** Cp. Ex. 27, 20. 21. This oil was exceptionally pure, because all leaves, parts of branches and twigs, and all other foreign matter was removed; and the olives from which this oil was gained were not stamped or pressed in presses, but merely cut and beaten, a process which caused the oil to drain off without any other juices of the fruit. V. 3. **Without the veil of the testimony,** the curtain which hid the Ark of the Covenant with the tables of the testimony from the eyes of all the children of Israel, **in the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** in the Holy Place, **shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the Lord continually,** that is, he was to place the lamps filled with the pure oil on the seven-armed candlestick and light them in the evening, and put them in order in the morning by cleaning them and trimming their wicks. **It shall be a statute forever in your generations.** V. 4. **He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually.** This was a function which was expressly delegated to the priests while the Levitical precepts were in force. V. 5. **And thou shalt take fine flour,** wheaten flour, **and bake twelve cakes thereof; two-tenth deals** (a little more than five quarts) **shall be in one cake.** V. 6. **And thou shalt set them in two rows,** or heaps, **six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord,** upon the table of showbread made of pure gold, on the north side of the altar of incense, in the Holy Place. V. 7. **And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row,** the pure natural gum, as a gift from the people, the twelve tribes of Israel being represented by the twelve cakes of the showbread. The frankincense, according to Jewish tradition, was placed beside each heap of showbread in golden censers, **that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord,** its sweet odor serving to bring the people into remembrance before the Lord. V. 8. **Every Sabbath he,** the priest on duty, **shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.** In this unbloody sacrifice the congregation brought the fruit of its activity, of its life, and of its sanctification before the face of the Lord, and thus presented itself to Him as a people diligent in good works. V. 9. **And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place, it** belonged to the food which they consumed somewhere in the Sanctuary or in its court; **for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute.** It was a symbol and guarantee of the eternal covenant which existed between Jehovah and His people. We Christians have a more perfect table, at which our communion with God and the covenant of His mercy are renewed as often as we come in true faith, namely, the table of His Supper.

A BLASPHEMER STONED.—V. 10. **And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian,** one of the mixed multitude that went up with the children of Israel out of Egypt, Ex. 12, 38, **went out among the children of Israel,** he left his tent and that part of the camp appointed for his people and mingled with the true Israelites; **and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp,** engaged in a quarrel; v. 11. **and the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed;** he uttered "the Name" (of God) with irreverence and contempt, the climax being reached in his bold denunciation of Jehovah. Any blasphemy against the name of Jehovah, as against the name above all names, was not only blasphemy against the God of Israel, but also against the religion of His revelation, against the covenant with Jehovah, and thus against the holy source of all consecrations, as one commentator has it. **And they brought him unto Moses,** that is, those that were witnesses of the blasphemy; **(and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan;)** v. 12. **and they put him in ward,** they secured or imprisoned him, **that the mind of the Lord might be showed them,** for the measure of punishment and the form of death in such a case had not yet been expressly stated. V. 13. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 14. **Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head,** thereby ridding themselves of all complicity in the guilt which might have rested upon them on account of their being witnesses of the sin, **and let all the congregation stone him.** Under the form of government which was directly responsible to God capital punishment was imposed for transgressions of this nature. V. 15. **And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying,** with reference to this execution, **Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin,** that is, the guilt and then also the punishment of sin as the Lord laid it upon the people under His direct government. V. 16. **And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord,** utters the name above all names in a spirit of levity and contempt, **he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him,** the emphasis upon the execution being very strong; **as well the stran-**

ger as he that is born in the land, Israelite or non-Israelite, all that were under the jurisdiction of the government, **when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.** And the Lord now expands this ordinance to include some other cases in which He demanded similar punishment. V. 17. **And he that killeth any man,** strikes him down so that his life is taken, **shall surely be put to death.** V. 18. **And he that killeth a beast shall make it good, beast for beast.** V. 19. **And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor,** any bodily harm or the loss of any organ; **as he hath done, so shall it be done to him:** v. 20. **breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again,** for the law of restitution demanded reparation. V. 21. **And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it; and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death.** V. 22. **Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger as for one of your own country; for I am the Lord, your God.** The same laws that were given to the Israelites were to apply to the non-citizen that chose to live in their country. Cp. Ex. 21, 12 ff. V. 23. **And Moses spake to the children of Israel that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses,** thus putting away the evil out of their midst. A Christian congregation has no jurisdiction over life and death, but notorious and unrepentant sinners, such as blasphemers, should be excluded from their organization; and it is self-evident among Christians that the law of love demands restoration of all goods in which one's neighbor has been harmed.

CHAPTER 25.

The Sabbath Years.

THE SEVENTH YEAR. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai,** while the children of Israel were still encamped in its vicinity, **saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you,** the certainty of this event being set forth time and again, **then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord,** the soil should be given periods of rest, in which the land should lie fallow. V. 3. **Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;** v. 4. **but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.** The earth was to be saved from the hand of man, lest its strength be exhausted for earthly purposes, and man was to be saved from the uninterrupted drudgery which tended to chain his thoughts to the soil and to the bitter labor in the sweat of his brow which was connected therewith. V. 5. **That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest,** the volunteer grain from the kernels that had dropped out at the last harvest, **thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed,** the grapes which grew in the vineyard without the attention of the husbandman; **for it is a year of rest unto the land.** V. 6. **And the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee and for thy servant and for thy maid,** both male and female slaves being named, **and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee.** So all the volunteer grain and the volunteer fruit was not to be harvested, but was to be eaten out of the field, as the need for food arose, this rule applying not only to men, but also to animals, both domestic and wild; v. 7. **and for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land shall all the increase thereof be meat,** be used as food. The Sabbatical Year was a civil year, which began after the harvest, in the late fall, for in the next fall, at the beginning of the eighth year, the cultivation of the land was resumed. God wanted to signify to the people of His covenant that He was well able to keep them, even without the labor of their hands, if they would strive to keep His covenant and be satisfied with His mercy.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE. — V. 8. **And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.** V. 9. **Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month,** which formally opened this special Sabbatical Year; **in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.** After the solemn quiet of the day on which all the people afflicted their souls, and after the great rites of the annual propitiation had been completed, probably at the end of the evening sacrifices, the glad sounding of the trumpets proclaimed the Year of Jubilee. V. 10. **And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.** This proclamation of freedom from the toil and drudgery which came into the world as a consequence of sin was most fitting just after the great reconciliation of the people with the covenant God had been completed. Twice in every century two fallow years followed upon each other, and the land had an opportunity to recover its strength. It

shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family, as the further ordinances prescribed. V. 11. **A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed,** as in the Sabbatical Year, v. 4. V. 12. **For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you; ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field,** directly from the stalks, from the vine, from the trees, without harvesting or storing in granaries. V. 13. **In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession,** to the land which had been in the possession of his family from the beginning. V. 14. **And if thou sell aught unto thy neighbor, or buyest aught of thy neighbor's hand, ye shall not oppress one another,** not overreach or practise fraud; v. 15. **according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbor, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee;** v. 16. **according to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it; for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee.** By this rule the price of the land was regulated according to the number of crops still remaining till the next Year of Jubilee: if the buyer would get many crops, the price was high; if the purchaser would get but a few crops until the land had to be restored to its original owner, the price was low. V. 17. **Ye shall not therefore oppress one another** by overreaching contrary to this commandment; **but thou shalt fear thy God; for I am the Lord, your God,** whose punishment was sure to strike the offender. V. 18. **Wherefore ye shall do My statutes and keep My judgments,** both the special precepts and those based upon the natural law of love, **and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety,** securely, free from all care and worry. V. 19. **And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill,** not merely enough to sustain life, but a surplus, **and dwell therein in safety.** V. 20. **And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase.** V. 21. **Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.** The crop of the forty-eighth year would be sufficient for all their needs, not only during the forty-ninth, as a regular Sabbatical Year, but also during the fiftieth, as the Jubilee Year, to the harvest of the fifty-first year, in fact. V. 22. **And ye shall sow the eighth year,** at the time of the fall rains, **and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store.** V. 23. **The land shall not be sold forever,** with a clear, absolute title to the purchaser; **for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me,** the Lord's lessees in holding any real estate. No person could hold farm land absolutely, if he purchased it between years of jubilee, any purchase in reality being only a temporary lease for a number of years. V. 24. **And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land;** the seller was always to have the right of redeeming the land which he had sold, as shown in the regulations following to the end of the chapter. Christians will also never lose sight of the fact that they are but strangers and pilgrims here on earth, that they hold their possessions only by the bounty of the Lord, and that their true home is above.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE POOR AND FOR SLAVES. V. 25. **If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession,** land or houses in the country, **and if any of his kin come to redeem it,** the man upon whom this duty devolved, v. 48, **then shall he redeem that which his brother sold,** buy it back for the former owner. V. 26. **And if the man,** the original owner, **have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it,** if he finds himself in a position that he can buy back the land which he sold, v. 27. **then let him count the years of the sale thereof,** since the sale was made, **and restore the overplus,** whatever price had been paid for the crops still remaining till the next Year of Jubilee, **unto the man to whom he sold it, that he may return unto his possession.** V. 28. **But if he be not able to restore it to him,** if he cannot raise the money needed to regain possession of his land in this way, **then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession,** for the provision was that all leases, called sales, should terminate in the Year of Jubilee. V. 29. **And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it,** for the purchase price, **within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year may he redeem it.** V. 30. **And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established forever to him that bought it throughout his generations; it shall not go out in the Jubilee.** This was a distinct exception to the rule which applied to land in the open country and in towns. V. 31. **But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the Jubilee.** V. 32. **Notwithstanding the cities of the Levites and the houses of the cities of their possession may the Levites**

redeem at any time. In their interest exceptions were always permitted. V. 33. **And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold and the city of his possession,** that is, the house on its location in the city of the Levites, **shall go out in the Year of Jubilee,** be restored to the Levite, the original owner, without cost to him; **for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel.** V. 34. **But the field of the suburbs of their cities,** the open meadow-land surrounding their cities, used for pasturing their cattle and flocks, **may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession,** and community property, at that. V. 35. **And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee,** having failed entirely in his business, **then thou shalt relieve him, — yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, — that he may live with thee.** Here provision is made for the second contingency, namely, that connected with a man's having sold himself into bondage on account of poverty. The paragraph is introduced with an admonition to help the poor brother who is in need of financial assistance. V. 36. **Take thou no usury of him or increase,** neither interest in the case of money nor an added amount in the case of other necessaries of life; **but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.** V. 37. **Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.** V. 38. **I am the Lord, your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.** Because the Land of Promise was to the Israelites a gift of God's merciful goodness, therefore they were not to forget kindness and mercy in dealing with their poor brothers. V. 39. **And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant,** not treat him as a slave nor have him perform the labor of a slave, v. 40. **but as an hired servant and as a sojourner,** as a worker under contract, **he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the Year of Jubilee;** v. 41. **and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.** This ordinance supplements Ex. 21, 2—6, for it would come into effect both if the servant had not yet been with a master seven years, or if he had declared his willingness to remain with his master and had received the mark of bondage in his ear. V. 42. **For they are My servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt,** they were God's peculiar property; **they shall not be sold as bondmen.** V. 43. **Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor,** as over a true slave, **but shalt fear thy God.** V. 44. **Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you;** these only could be kept in true slavery; **of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.** V. 45. **Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession,** and could be kept and treated as slaves. V. 46. **And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever,** this applying to heathen slaves of Hebrew masters only. **But over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.** V. 47. **And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor,** the non-Israelite growing wealthy in the same proportion as the Israelite grew poor, **and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family,** that is, to the descendants of immigrants who were not citizens; v. 48. **after that he is sold, he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him,** in order not to have the disgrace of being in bondage to an outsider resting upon him; v. 49. **either his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able,** if he finds ways and means of raising the money, **he may redeem himself.** V. 50. **And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the Year of Jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him.** The purchase price was to be divided by the number of years which he would have to serve till the next Year of Jubilee, and the time which he had already served was to be valued in terms of a hired servant, this amount being subtracted from the entire sum. V. 51. **If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for,** as much as his services would have been worth to his master until the Year of Jubilee. V. 52. **And if there remain but few years unto the Year of Jubilee, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption,** in this case a relatively small sum. V. 53. **And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him,** as such he should be regarded by his master; **and the other shall not rule with rigor over him in thy sight,** so that the people would become aware of it; for as soon as such treatment were known, the government was supposed to act. V. 54. **And if he be not re-**

deemed in these years, then he shall go out in the Year of Jubilee, both he and his children with him. V. 55. **For unto Me the children of Israel are servants; they are My servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.** Thus the Year of Jubilee became a year of freedom and of mercy to the entire people, but especially to the poor and oppressed, and a year of rest from toil and drudgery. In this respect it was a type of the acceptable year of the Lord, in which the Gospel is being preached to the meek, in which the broken-hearted are being bound up, liberty is being proclaimed to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, this time being in itself a foretaste of the day when the sons of God will be received into the perfect and eternal liberty provided for them, Is. 61, 1—3; Luke 4, 17—21.

CHAPTER 26.

Promises and Threats.

BLESSINGS PROMISED TO THE OBEDIENT. — V. 1. **Ye shall make you no idols,** literally, nothingnesses, vain, empty deities of your own imagination, **nor graven image,** one carved or chiseled from wood and stone, **neither rear you up a standing image,** a pillar of commemoration used for idolatrous purposes; **neither shall ye set up any image of stone,** a stone shaped or hewn to represent some real or imagined creature, **in your land to bow down unto it; for I am the Lord, your God.** V. 2. **Ye shall keep My Sabbaths,** as the days set apart for His special worship, **and reverence My Sanctuary,** stand in awe of the place where the holy God revealed Himself to them. **I am the Lord.** These two verses, containing substantially the entire Law of God as applied to the Jews in particular, serve admirably as a basis of the following promises and warnings. V. 3. **If ye walk in My statutes and keep My commandments,** both the general precepts of the natural law and the special ordinances pertaining to the children of Israel, **and do them,** v. 4. **then I will give you rain in due season,** the showers at the two periods of the year when the land needed moisture for fruitfulness, Deut. 11, 14, **and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.** The extraordinary extent of the blessings is shown next. V. 5. **And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time.** Threshing in Palestine was done on the great open floors, beginning with the harvest, in April; the grapes were usually ripe in September; and sowing for the new crop began at the end of October or the beginning of November. **And ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely,** without cares and worries about the necessaries of life. V. 6. **And I will give peace in the land,** perfect security, **and ye shall lie down,** in peaceful settlement, like a herd which is safe from the attacks of beasts of prey, **and none shall make you afraid. And I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land,** because the enemies that might venture an attack would be driven back triumphantly from their borders. V. 7. **And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword,** since the Israelites would be rendered invincible by the Lord. V. 8. **And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight,** a proverbial expression for the absolute certainty of victory for Israel's arms, Deut. 23, 30; Is. 30, 17; **and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.** These promises were abundantly fulfilled, as the history of Israel and Judah shows, *e. g.*, in the case of Gideon. V. 9. **For I will have respect unto you,** turning His face upon them in goodness and mercy, **and make you fruitful and multiply you,** giving increase upon increase, blessings which were properly appreciated in those days, **and establish My covenant with you,** which had promised such unusual blessings, Gen. 17, 4—6. V. 10. **And ye shall eat old store,** grain of last year's crop, **and bring forth the old because of the new,** since the old would not even be consumed by the time the new harvest would be filling the granaries. V. 11. **And I will set My Tabernacle among you,** as the visible sign of His merciful presence; **and My soul shall not abhor you.** V. 12. **And I will walk among you,** in gracious communion through the worship offered to Him, **and will be your God, and ye shall be My people.** Cp. Deut. 23, 15. V. 13. **I am the Lord, your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt that ye should not be their bondmen,** held in shameful slavery by a heathen nation; **and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.** The deliverance from Egypt was a proof and pledge of the fulfilment of God's promises, and the fellowship which the children of Israel enjoyed in Him was symbolic of the perfect communion which the children of God have entered upon with Him through the redemption of Christ. If we Christians believe and trust in God with all our heart, and walk in the ways of His commandments, then He will remain with us with His Word and Sacraments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him and gladly perform the demands of His holy will.

THE CURSE UPON THE DISOBEDIENT. — V. 14. **But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments,** v. 15. **and if ye shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but that ye break My covenant,** wilfully set it aside, v. 16. **I also will do this unto you: I will even appoint over you terror,** order it to strike them, to fill their hearts with nameless dread, **consumption, and the burning ague,** a consuming fever, **that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it,** they would find no difficulty about entering the country and taking the standing grain or the contents of the granaries. V. 17. **And I will set My face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies,** with no chance of overcoming them; **they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you,** which is characteristic of the godless and wicked, Prov. 28, 1; Ps. 53, 5. After this preliminary summary the Lord now announces the form which His punishment would take in a carefully graded series which reaches its climax in the last part of the chapter. V. 18. **And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.** V. 19. **And I will break the pride,** the majesty, the glory, the boast, **of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass,** withholding both the rain above and the fruitfulness below; v. 20. **and your strength shall be spent in vain,** in the fruitless endeavor to coax the land into producing; **for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.** That was the first degree of the increased punishment: an absolute lack of fertility in the land. V. 21. **And if ye walk contrary unto Me and will not hearken unto Me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins,** as the second step of the intensified curse. V. 22. **I will also send wild beasts among you,** the larger predatory beasts and birds, **which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate** on account of the reduced number of inhabitants. These were the two punishments of the second increased degree: loss caused by beasts of prey and bereavement. V. 23. **And if ye will not be reformed by Me by these things,** if they would not learn their lesson as held before them by the Lord, **but will walk contrary unto Me,** v. 24. **then will I also walk contrary unto you,** be engaged in continual acts of aggressive enmity, **and will punish you yet seven times for your sins,** as the third step in the increased revenge. V. 25. **And I will bring a sword upon you,** permit the scourge of war to sweep their country, **that shall avenge the quarrel of My covenant; and when ye are gathered together within your cities,** where the greater density of the population made the spread of diseases easier, **I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy,** for war and epidemics usually come together. V. 26. **And when I have broken the staff of your bread,** which is here also represented as the staff of life, the proverbial expression denoting the infliction of extreme scarcity, **ten women,** of as many households, **shall bake your bread in one oven,** where formerly ten were needed, **and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight,** in careful rations; **and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.** That was the third stage of God's increased punishment: war, pestilence, and famine. V. 27. **And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me,** v. 28. **then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury,** in consuming anger; **and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins,** in some last horrible catastrophes. V. 29. **And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat,** in a madness of cannibal hunger brought on by the severe famine. V. 30. **And I will destroy your high places,** where idolatrous worship was carried on, **and cut down your images,** the pillars erected to the heathen deities, **and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and My soul shall abhor you,** be filled with loathing at their sight. V. 31. **And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation,** the houses of idolatry erected in spite of the warning of Jehovah; **and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors,** the burnt sacrifices which they brought in the insolence of their hypocrisy, as though the Lord would accept the mere outward work, without faith of the heart. V. 32. **And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it,** even they would be surprised at the distinct marks of God's punitive justice, as they were in evidence everywhere. V. 33. **And I will scatter you among the heathen,** in a shameful captivity equivalent to slavery, **and will draw out a sword after you,** drive them from their homes with a drawn sword; **and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.** That was the climax of God's revenging justice: destruction of all idols and their sanctuaries, complete overthrow of the cities, desolation of the land, and deportation of its inhabitants. These threats hold good even to-day. If we turn away from God, deny Him faith and obedience, and despise His commandments, He will take away His blessings, peace and prosperity, from us and even visit His anger upon us. Therefore we should fear His wrath and not act contrary to His commandments.

THE EFFECTS OF THESE VISITATIONS AND THE RESTORATION OF THE COVENANT. — V. 34. **Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her Sabbaths.** It is here implied that Israel, in its revolt against Jehovah and His commandments, would omit the observance of the sabbatical years, and that the land, suffering under the oppression of this greed, would feel the relief brought about by the deportation of the owners. V. 35. **As long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest, because it did not rest in your Sabbaths when ye dwelt upon it.** V. 36. **And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies,** filling their hearts with a cowardly fear, with the despondency of an unreasonable terror; **and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth,** victims more of their own terror than of any harm done to them by their enemies. V. 37. **And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.** V. 38. **And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.** Cp. Num. 13, 32; Ezek. 36, 13. V. 39. **And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands,** so long as they remain in their unrepentant attitude toward God; **and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them;** for if the children follow in the footsteps of their sinful parents, the sins of the latter are visited upon them also. But now the mercy of the Lord comes into the foreground again. V. 40. **If they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers,** the guilt which they brought upon themselves by their misdeeds, **with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me,** an open confession being necessary to show the sincerity of their repentance; v. 41. **and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies,** thereby freely acknowledging that they were suffering a well-deserved punishment; **if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity,** v. 42. **then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember,** with all the blessings promised therein; **and I will remember the land,** turn back to it with thoughts of love and kindness. V. 43. **The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them,** being free from the oppression of a population that disregarded the will of the Lord; **and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity,** bowing their backs to the Lord's chastening rod; **because, even because they despised My judgments, and because their soul abhorred My statutes.** V. 44. **And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies,** when it seems that they are absolutely forsaken by God, **I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly,** for that had not been the purpose of His punishment in the first place, **and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord, their God,** who always has mercy upon the repentant sinner. V. 45. **But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen. I am the Lord.** In this way the punishment of the Lord would finally result in blessing the people, in bringing them back to the fellowship of the covenant which He had never repudiated. V. 46. **These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the Lord made between Him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.** The history of Israel, as foreshadowed in this chapter, is an example of warning to all men. Unto those that are disobedient to the truth the Lord will render tribulation and anguish, Rom. 2, 8. 9. He will in flaming fire take vengeance on them that know not God, that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. 1, 8. 9. But His mercy is always ready to turn to those that come to Him with a sorrowful and repentant heart.

CHAPTER 27.

Of Vows.

OF MEN AND BEASTS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow,** an exceptional, unusual, special promise to the Lord, which involved the offering of his own body to the Lord for some service in His worship, **the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation;** the redemption from the obligations of the promise had to be made in accordance with the estimate given out, first by Moses and later by the priest in charge. The fulfilment of the vow consisted in this, that the person concerned paid the price of the estimation to the Sanctuary. V. 3. **And thy estimation shall be of the male,** in the case of a man, **from twenty years old even unto sixty**

years old; even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the Sanctuary (about $32). V. 4. **And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels** (about $19.20). V. 5. **And if it be from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels** (about $12.80) **and for the female ten shekels** (about $6.40). V. 6. **And if it be from a month old even unto five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver** (about $3.20), **and for the female thy estimation shall be three shekels of silver** (about $1.92). V. 7. **And if it be from sixty years old and above,** at the time of life when the bodily strength usually will not permit strenuous service; **if it be a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels** (about $9.60) **and for the female ten shekels** (about $6.40). V. 8. **And if he be poorer than thy estimation,** if he cannot afford the price of redemption according to the priest's estimate, **then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him,** fix the price of redemption in proportion to the person's ability to pay; **according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him.** This special ordinance made it possible even for the very poor to dedicate themselves to the Lord by a vow; for the Lord's mercy and kindness at all times stands out with special force. V. 9. **And if it be a beast whereof men bring an offering unto the Lord,** that is, if the vow concerns such an animal, **all that any man giveth of such unto the Lord shall be holy,** dedicated to Him, set aside subject to His orders. V. 10. **He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad or a bad for a good;** for the vow, having once been made, could not be recalled; **and if he shall at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy,** both of them devoted to the Lord, subject to His disposal, those without blemish being used for sacrifices, those not perfect being allotted to the priest. V. 11. **And if it be any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the Lord, then he shall present the beast before the priest;** v. 12. **and the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad; as thou valuest it, who art the priest, so shall it be.** The priest was to fix a medium price, neither too high nor too low, for the proceeds of the sale were used in the interest of the Sanctuary. V. 13. **But if he will at all redeem it,** for his own use, **then he shall add a fifth part thereof unto thy estimation,** as a sort of compensation for his act in taking the animal back for his own use.

Of Houses, Fields, and Firstlings. — V. 14. **And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord,** in a vow devoting its value to the service of Jehovah, **then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad; as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand,** his medium valuation should be final. V. 15. **And if he that sanctified it will redeem his house,** desiring to have it back for his own use, **then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his.** V. 16. **And if a man shall sanctify unto the Lord some part of a field of his possession,** the price of its valuation being intended for the use of the Sanctuary, as a gift, **then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof,** according to the amount of seed used in putting the field to grain; **an homer** (a little over eight bushels) **of barley-seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver** (about $32.40). V. 17. **If he sanctify his field from the Year of Jubilee,** immediately after its close, when the land was again cultivated, **according to thy estimation it shall stand.** The valuation once fixed would hold good till the next Year of Jubilee, and the one that made the vow would be obliged to make his yearly payments accordingly. V. 18. **But if he sanctify his field after the Jubilee,** after some years had elapsed, **then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the Year of the Jubilee, and it shall be abated from thy estimation.** In the case of a field of barley, for instance, if twenty years still remained till the next Year of Jubilee, then the person concerned would have twenty shekels to pay, plus the one-fifth which was added for the sake of compensation, if it was so arranged. V. 19. **And if he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it, then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be assured to him.** V. 20. **And if he will not redeem the field,** by the regular payment of the price of valuation, **or if he have sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more;** if a person lapsed in his payments, he forfeited his ownership of the field. V. 21. **But the field, when it goeth out in the Jubilee,** out of the hands of the man that bought it in the mean time, **shall be holy unto the Lord, as a field devoted,** and thus the property of the Sanctuary; **the possession thereof shall be the priest's.** V. 22. **And if a man sanctify unto the Lord a field which he hath bought, which is not of the fields of his possession,** does not belong to the land which is the perpetual inheritance of his family, v. 23. **then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, even unto the Year of the Jubilee,** the total sum due as the price of redemption; **and he shall give thine estimation in that day,** make payment of the required sum at once, **as a holy thing unto the Lord.** This provision obviated the possibility of the land's being devoted to the Sanctuary and thus being lost to the original owner,

who was to regain possession of it in the year of the Jubilee. V. 24. **In the year of the Jubilee the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land did belong,** and who could not dispose of it absolutely, but only until the year of redemption. V. 25. **And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the Sanctuary,** the standard of weight for all money transactions; **twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.** V. 26. **Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the Lord's firstling,** Ex. 13, 2. 12, **no man shall sanctify it;** these animals could not be used in the event of vows; **whether it be ox or sheep; it is the Lord's.** V. 27. **And if it be of an unclean beast,** one that could be used neither for sacrifices nor as food for the priests, **then he shall redeem it according to thine estimation, and shall add a fifth part of it thereto; or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation,** for the benefit of the Sanctuary. V. 28. **Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed, while it is under the vow; every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord,** a gift which cannot be redeemed, surrendered to the Lord to be disposed of at His will, irrevocably cut off from all common use. V. 29. **None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, dedicated to the Lord in this special sense, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death;** the person was irredeemable, and Jehovah's sentence of destruction was sure to be carried out. V. 30. **And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord,** absolutely at His disposal, and Jehovah executed the ban. V. 31 **And if a man will at all redeem aught of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof,** as a penalty or compensation. V. 32. **And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod,** that is, under the staff of the shepherd, who keeps a careful record of the animals in his care, **the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord,** the tenth part of the annual increase was set apart for the use of the Lord and His Sanctuary. V. 33. **He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it,** v. 10; **and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.** V. 34. **These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai,** this last chapter on vows being an appendix to the Book of Leviticus, the types of whose sacrifices point forward to the Lord, our Righteousness; for they were prescribed to the Jews of the Old Covenant because of transgressions, until the promised Seed should come.

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

INTRODUCTION.

The fourth book of Moses received its English name from the fact that the first chapter relates the numbering of the people, and that lists and enumerations are found in various parts of the book. It records the history of the chosen nation from the second year after its departure from Egypt to its arrival at the borders of Canaan in the fortieth year of the desert journey. God had intended to bring His people into the Promised Land shortly after the establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai. The Book of Numbers shows us that the children of Israel who left Egypt in adult life failed to reach Canaan, and, in a few vivid sketches, indicates the reason for this failure. "What a picture this is of the life of many a child of God to-day! Redeemed out of the bondage of Satan, yet failing to enter into the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Do we not all know, either in the past or in the present, something of the wilderness life of failure and defeat? Yet even in their wanderings the Lord did not forsake His people; He had compassion on them, He let them enjoy His provision and protection and guidance day by day."

The narrative of the book summarizes the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness during the thirty-nine years following their departure from Mount Sinai. It is merely a sketch, and therefore mentions those occurrences only that were of vital significance for the people. They had remained at the foot of Mount Sinai, at the southern extremity of the peninsula for an entire year. According to the conclusions of various independent investigators the amount of vegetation in that region at that time was fully able to sustain the cattle of the Israelites, and that there was usually no lack of rain appears from Ps. 68, 7—9; 77, 16—20. After leaving their camp at the foot of Mount Sinai, the children of Israel encamped for unknown periods at various places, the location of which is largely a matter of conjecture. In the second year of their wanderings they reached Kadesh-barnea, which

must have been close to the boundary of Palestine; for from there the twelve spies were dispatched who were to report upon the character of the land and upon the appearance and prowess of its inhabitants. The tale with which they returned so terrified the Israelites as to cause them to rebel against the guidance of the Lord. As a consequence they were condemned to many years of wandering in the desert. When a portion of the people attempted to force an entrance into the Promised Land, they suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of their enemies, and were obliged to bow to the Lord's decree. Turning away from the desired goal of their journey, they sadly entered upon the weary plodding of the following years. The Scriptures relate very little of their adventures during the remaining thirty-eight years; we know hardly more than the names of their chief camps, the location of which no research has ever been able exactly to determine. The book ends with the story of the arrival of the Israelites and the happenings in the Plains of Moab. Interspersed between the various parts of the narrative we find additional legislation, most of the ordinances referring to the civil life of the people, together with some further instructions concerning the religious ceremonial. Our interest centers chiefly in the Messianic prophecy of Balaam and in the Messianic type of the brazen serpent, both of which are expressly referred to in the New Testament.

The Book of Numbers is usually divided into four parts, namely, that referring to the preparations for the removal from Mount Sinai, that relating the chief events during the journey from Sinai to the fields of Moab, that containing the prophecies of Balaam and his death, and that containing regulations governing the conquest and the division of Canaan.[1])

1) *Concordia Bible Class*, Feb., 1919, 25—27; Fuerbringer, *Einl. in das Alte Testament*, 25.

CHAPTER 1.

The Census and Its Regulations.

The Muster of the People. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai,** while the people were still encamped below the mountain, **in the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** from the place above the mercy-seat, between the cherubs, where He had promised to reveal His glory and to communicate with Moses, Ex. 25, 22, **on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,** v. 2. **Take ye,** Moses and his assistants, **the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel after their families,** the large divisions of the tribes known by the name of some prominent leader, Ex. 6, 14, **by the house of their fathers,** which was a subdivision of the former, **with the number of their names,** numbered and recorded individually, **every male by their polls,** for these only were entered into the lists, Ex. 30, 14; v. 3. **from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel. Thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies,** muster them in such divisions, because they were to be organized as the armies of Jehovah, carry arms in waging war in His interest. V. 4. **And with you,** as assistants for this special purpose, **there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers,** holding at least this rank among the people. V. 5. **And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: Of the tribe of Reuben: Elizur, the son of Shedur.** V. 6. **Of Simeon: Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai.** V. 7. **Of Judah: Nahshon, the son of Amminadab.** V. 8. **Of Issachar: Nethaneel, the son of Zuar.** V. 9. **Of Zebulun: Eliab, the son of Helon.** V. 10. **Of the children of Joseph,** who were divided into two sections, or tribes, the one division taking the place of the Levites, who were not numbered with the tribes: **of Ephraim: Elishama, the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh: Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur.** V. 11. **Of Benjamin: Abidan, the son of Gideoni.** V. 12. **Of Dan: Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai.** V. 13. **Of Asher: Pagiel, the son of Ocran.** V. 14. **Of Gad: Eliasaph, the son of Deuel.** V. 15. **Of Naphtali: Ahira, the son of Enan.** V. 16. **These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel,** for that division of the people known technically as "family" numbered at least a thousand households. V. 17. **And Moses and Aaron took these men which are expressed by their names,** distinguished by being selected by the Lord Himself; v. 18. **and they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month; and they,** the people, **declared their pedigrees,** stated exactly from whom they were descended, **after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls.** V. 19. **As the Lord commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the Wilderness of Sinai.** V. 20. **And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to**

war: v. 21. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred. V. 22. Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 23. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. V. 24. Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 25. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Gad, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty. V. 26. Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 27. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Judah, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. V. 28. Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 29. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. V. 30. Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 31. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. V. 32. Of the children of Joseph, namely, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 33. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred. V. 34. Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 35. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. V. 36. Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 37. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. V. 38. Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 39. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Dan, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. V. 40. Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 41. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. V. 42. Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: v. 43. those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. V. 44. These are those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men; each one was for the house of his fathers. V. 45. So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel: v. 46. even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty, or, in figures, 603,550, a number which tallies exactly with that given about nine months before, when the Sanctuary money was required, Ex. 38, 25. 26.

THE LEVITES SET ASIDE FOR GOD'S SERVICE. V. 47. But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them, they were not included in this census. V. 48. For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, v. 49. Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, they were not to be mustered and organized for war, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel; v. 50. but thou shalt appoint the Levites over the Tabernacle of Testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it; they were to have all these things in their charge and be responsible for their safe-keeping; they shall bear the Tabernacle and all the vessels thereof, carry them from one encampment to the next; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the Taber-

nacle, in carrying out the charge entrusted to them. V. 51. **And when the Tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down,** for it was constructed with this object in mind; **and when the Tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up; and the stranger that cometh nigh,** he who does not belong to the tribe of Levi, **shall be put to death.** V. 52. **And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp,** in that section of the encampment assigned to his tribe, **and every man by his own standard,** the flag, or banner, which showed the location of his tribe, **throughout their hosts.** V. 53. **But the Levites shall pitch round about the Tabernacle of Testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel;** for the anger of the Lord would surely strike every unauthorized person that dared to transgress the Lord's commandment in coming near to the Tabernacle; **and the Levites shall keep the charge of the Tabernacle of Testimony.** V. 54. **And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses; so did they.** Note that it appears throughout: God is a God of order, 1 Cor. 14, 40, and it pleases Him if the matters pertaining to His service are carried out according to a well-arranged plan.

CHAPTER 2.

The Order of the Tribes in the Camp and on the March.

V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,** saying, v. 2. **Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard,** flag, or banner, **with the ensign of their father's house.** There were four of such large banners, one each for the four leading tribes, Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan, each of which had two other tribes on its side of the Tabernacle. **Far off about the Tabernacle of the Congregation shall they pitch,** that is, at some distance, and yet near enough to make their relation to the Sanctuary prominent. V. 3. **And on the east side, toward the rising of the sun, shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies; and Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, shall be captain of the children of Judah.** V. 4. **And his host,** and those that were numbered of them, the army of Judah alone, **were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.** V. 5. **And those that do pitch next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar; and Nethaneel, the son of Zuar, shall be captain of the children of Issachar.** V. 6. **And his host,** and those that were numbered thereof, **were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.** V. 7. **Then the tribe of Zebulun; and Eliab, the son of Helon, shall be captain of the children of Zebulun.** V. 8. **And his host,** and those that were numbered thereof, **were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.** V. 9. **All that were numbered in the camp of Judah were an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth,** as the vanguard and the first division of the mighty army of the Lord, the position of Judah as the champion of his brethren thus being brought out, Gen. 49, 8. 9. V. 10. **On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies; and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur, the son of Shedeur.** V. 11. **And his host,** and those that were numbered thereof, **were forty and six thousand and five hundred.** V. 12. **And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon; and the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai.** V. 13. **And his host,** and those that were numbered of them, **were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.** V. 14. **Then the tribe of Gad; and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph, the son of Reuel.** V. 15. **And his host,** and those that were numbered of them, **were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty.** V. 16. **All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben,** in the entire division under the leadership of Elizur, **were an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank.** V. 17. **Then the Tabernacle of the Congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp,** in the center of the entire encampment; **as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards,** that is, every man of the entire congregation on the side of the camp where he pitched his tent, in the neighborhood of the banner under which he marched. V. 18. **On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies; and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama, the son of Ammihud.** V. 19. **And his host,** and those that were numbered of them, **were forty thousand and five hundred.** V. 20. **And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh; and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur.** V. 21. **And his host,** and those that were numbered of them, **were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.** V. 22. **Then**

the tribe of Benjamin; and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan, the son of Gideoni. V. 23. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. V. 24. All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim, the entire division under the leadership of Elishama, **were an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank,** immediately behind the Levites. **V. 25. The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies; and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai. V. 26. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. V. 27. And those that encamp by him shall be the tribe of Asher; and the captain of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel, the son of Ocran. V. 28. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. V. 29. Then the tribe of Naphtali; and the captain of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira, the son of Enan. V. 30. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. V. 31. All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan,** under the leadership of Ahiezer, **were an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards,** bring up the rear and shield the people from attacks from behind. **V. 32. These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers; all those that were numbered of the camps,** the sections of the large camp, **throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty,** chap. 1, 46. **V. 33. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses. V. 34. And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses; so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.** To get a complete picture of the encampment of the Israelites, one must imagine a small rectangle representing the Tabernacle. On the right, that is, on the east, of this was the place of Moses, Aaron, and the priests, and beyond them that of the armies under the leadership of Judah; below, on the south, were the 8,000 Kohathites, and beyond them the divisions under the leadership of Reuben; to the left, on the west, were the 7,500 Gershonites, and beyond them the divisions under the leadership of Ephraim; and above, on the north, were the 6,200 Merarites, and beyond them the divisions under the leadership of Dan. As this entire great host moved forward under the guidance of the Angel of the Lord in the cloud, so the army of believers in the New Testament moves forward under the leadership of Christ.

CHAPTER 3.

The Mustering of the Levites.

THE FORMAL CHARGE.—**V. 1. These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that the Lord spake with Moses in Mount Sinai,** that is, this is their further history at this point. Aaron is here named first, because his sons were the heirs of the priesthood. **V. 2. And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the first-born, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.** Ex. 6, 23. **V. 3. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed,** for this form of induction into office was ordered for them as well as for the high priest, Ex. 28, 41, although it is expressly related of Aaron only, Lev. 8, 12; cp. v. 30, **whom he** (Moses) **consecrated to minister in the priest's office,** to perform all the functions which pertained to that office. **V. 4. And Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they offered strange fire before the Lord, in the Wilderness of Sinai,** Lev. 10, 1; **and they had no children. And Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron, their father,** that is, during his lifetime. The two men whom the wrath of God had struck down had no children, and therefore the two youngest sons of Aaron alone performed the work of the priests' ministry. **V. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 6. Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron, the priest,** like servants receiving the orders of their master, **that they may minister unto him. V. 7. And they shall keep his charge and the charge of the whole congregation before the Tabernacle of the Congregation to do the service of the Tabernacle;** they were to have charge of the entire ministry which had been entrusted to Aaron and the entire congregation with reference to the dwelling of God in the midst of His people. **V. 8. And they shall keep all the instruments of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** be responsible for their care, **and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the Tabernacle,** in the name of all the people. **V. 9. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Is-**

rael; their entire life-service was to be devoted to this ministry. V. 10. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death, for that was the punishment for every one not a priest that presumed even to approach the holy vessels. V. 11. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 12. **And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel,** as the substitutes for the oldest sons of all the people, who really should have had charge of this ministry, Ex. 13, 2; **therefore the Levites shall be Mine,** v. 13. **because all the first-born are Mine; for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto Me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast. Mine shall they be; I am the Lord.** Cp. Ex. 13, 12. 15. By virtue of this arrangement, which placed the ministry of the Tabernacle entirely into the hands of one tribe, the Lord secured their undivided interest, while at the same time He openly rewarded the members of the tribe of Levi for their quick determination in the defense of His honor, Ex. 32, 26 ff.

THE FORMAL MUSTERING. — V. 14. **And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying,** v. 15. **Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families,** as had been done in the case of the other tribes; **every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them.** V. 16. **And Moses numbered them according to the word of the Lord, as he was commanded,** thus completing the census of all the tribes. V. 17. **And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari.** V. 18. **And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei.** V. 19. **And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram,** the father of Moses and Aaron, these two, however, not being reckoned with the Kohathites, but in a separate category, **and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel.** V. 20. **And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers,** as they reckoned their descent from these princes among their ancestors.

THE CHARGES OF THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS AMONG THE LEVITES. — V. 21. **Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; these are the families of the Gershonites.** V. 22. **Those that were numbered of them,** mustered or entered into the rolls of service, **according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward,** for at that age the first-born boy babies were liable for the service of the Lord, **even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and five hundred.** V. 23. **The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the Tabernacle westward,** inside the armies led by the tribe of Ephraim. V. 24. **And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph, the son of Lael.** V. 25. **And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the Tabernacle of the Congregation shall be the tabernacle,** the inner curtains of variegated cloth, **and the tent,** the outer covering or curtain of goat-hair, **the covering thereof,** that of rams' skins and that of the leather of sea-cows, **and the hanging for the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the entrance to the Holy Place, v. 26. **and the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the Tabernacle,** the white byssus curtains as well as the beautiful entrance curtain of variegated material, **and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof,** the various guy-ropes for the Tabernacle, but not for the court, v. 37. The Gershonites had to tend to all the drapery and the curtains but the screen of the Most Holy Place. V. 27. **And of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these are the families of the Kohathites.** V. 28. **In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the Sanctuary,** taking their share in the ministry of the Holy Place. V. 29. **The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the Tabernacle southward,** inside the armies led by the tribe of Reuben. V. 30. **And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites** shall be **Elizaphan, the son of Uzziel.** V. 31. **And their charge,** for which they would be held responsible, **shall be the ark, and the table,** that of showbread, **and the candlestick, and the altars,** both the golden altar of the Holy Place and the altar of burnt offering in the court, **and the vessels of the Sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging,** the screen of the Most Holy Place, **and all the service thereof,** everything that was connected with the actual carrying of these appointments from one station to the next. V. 32. **And Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the Sanctuary;** he was the superintendent of the work as here described. V. 33. **Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these are the families of Merari.** V. 34. **And those that were numbered of them,** mustered as in the other cases, **according to the number of all the males,** from a month old and upward, **were six thousand and two hundred.** V. 35. **And the**

chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari was Zuriel, the son of Abihail; these shall pitch on the side of the Tabernacle northward, inside the armies under the leadership of the tribe of Dan. V. 36. **And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the Tabernacle,** the great planks which formed its walls, **and the bars thereof,** the cross-bars which held the planks upright, **and the pillars thereof,** at the entrance to the Tabernacle and to the Most Holy Place, **and the sockets thereof,** the bases of the planks and of the pillars, **and all the vessels thereof,** the pins and the tools, **and all that serveth thereto,** v. 37. **and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets,** the bronze bases which held the pillars upright, **and their pins, and their cords,** the guy-ropes which held them in place. Theirs was the last work when camp was struck and the first when a new station was reached. The work was thus divided in a manner which practically excluded all friction and made for the greatest efficiency. In this respect we Christians of the New Testament may learn a lesson from the children of Israel.

FINAL REGULATIONS. — V. 38. **But those that encamp before the Tabernacle toward the east, even before the Tabernacle of the Congregation eastward,** for its entrance was on that side, **shall be Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the Sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel,** performing the duties of the priesthood for all the children of Israel; **and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death,** v. 10. V. 39. **All that were numbered of the Levites which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the Lord, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand,** in round numbers, the exact figure being 22,300, or the three hundred were subtracted, as the Jews say, because they themselves were first-born and could therefore not be used in a comparison with the other tribes. V. 40. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Number all the first-born of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names.** V. 41. **And thou shalt take the Levites for Me (I am the Lord) instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel,** as their substitutes in the service of the Sanctuary; **and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel,** to be consecrated to the Lord and by Him designated for the use of the Levites. V. 42. **And Moses numbered, as the Lord commanded him, all the first-born among the children of Israel.** V. 43. **And all the first-born males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen** (22,273). V. 44. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 45. **Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be Mine. I am the Lord.** V. 46. **And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first-born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;** v. 47. **thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll** (about $3.20), **after the shekel of the Sanctuary shalt thou take them,** this being the standard of weight; **(the shekel is twenty gerahs;)** v. 48. **and thou shalt give the money wherewith the odd,** the surplus, number of them is to be redeemed unto **Aaron and to his sons,** as ransom money. V. 49. **And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites,** the 22,000 that were ransomed by the equal number of the Levites; v. 50. **of the first-born of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary** (1,365 shekels being about equal to $4,368); v. 51. **and Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses.** Although the men in the service of the ministry of the Word in the New Testament are supported by voluntary gifts, these gifts, for all of that, should not be less plentiful than were those under the Law.

CHAPTER 4.

The Special Work of the Levites.

THE WORK OF THE KOHATHITES. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,** saying, v. 2. **Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi,** for they had charge of the most holy vessels, **after their families, by the house of their fathers,** v. 3. **from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old,** for it was at that age that the Levites were in active service in the Sanctuary, **all that enter into the host,** as members of the holy army of Jehovah, **to do the work in the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** which was the special obligation resting upon them. V. 4. **This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the**

Tabernacle of the Congregation, about the most holy things; v. 5. **and when the camp setteth forward,** the signal having been given to move on to the next station, **Aaron shall come, and his sons,** for only the priests were allowed to perform this particular service, **and they shall take down the covering veil,** the screen of the Most Holy Place, **and cover the Ark of the Testimony with it,** this curtain thus serving as a screen even during the journey, for the very looking at the ark in presumptuous curiosity was punished by the Lord, 1 Sam. 6, 19; v. 6. **and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins,** that of leather made from the skins of sea-cows, **and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue,** of costly hyacinth-colored material, **and shall put in the staves thereof,** in the rings applied to the corners for that purpose. V. 7. **And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue,** as in the case of the ark, to distinguish it in a similar manner, **and put thereon the dishes,** the large bowls, **and the spoons, and the bowls,** the jugs or cans for the drink-offerings, **and covers to cover withal,** the small saucerlike dishes for pouring the drink-offering; **and the continual bread shall be thereon,** for so the showbread was called because it was always before the face of the Lord; v. 8. **and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins,** the fine crimson-colored cloth of purple thus being shielded against the weather by the outer leather covering, **and shall put in the staves thereof,** as in the case of the ark. V. 9. **And they shall take a cloth of blue,** of the same hyacinth-colored material, **and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff-dishes,** the various instruments used for snuffing and cleaning, **and all the oil-vessels thereof,** in which the oil for use in these lamps was stored, **wherewith they minister unto it;** v. 10. **and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it upon a bar,** a stretcherlike conveyance. V. 11. **And upon the golden altar,** that of incense, **they shall spread a cloth of blue,** as over the other appointments, for the hyacinth color was the color of Jehovah, **and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof;** v. 12. **and they shall take all the instruments of ministry wherewith they minister in the Sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put them on a bar,** on a conveyance for carrying; v. 13. **and they shall take away the ashes from the altar** of burnt offering, **and spread a purple cloth thereon,** one dyed with red purple, or of a crimson hue; v. 14. **and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the tongs, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basins,** or smaller bowls, **all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it,** fastening them in the rings intended for them. V. 15. **And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the Sanctuary and all the vessels of the Sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward,** only the laver and his foot being omitted in the enumeration, very likely because they received no covering; **after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the things which they had to carry from one station of the journey to the next. V. 16. **And to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat-offering** accompanying the burnt offering in the morning and in the evening, **and the anointing oil;** he had to see that all these were provided as needed; **and the oversight of all the Tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the Sanctuary and in the vessels thereof;** he was responsible for all the appointments. And as superintendent of the entire Tabernacle and all its equipment he had charge of the work of the Kohathites. Since the ministry of the latter was so important, but since it was also essential that they did not come into contact with the sacred vessels, the Lord renews His words of caution with special emphasis. V. 17. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,** v. 18. **Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites;** they should beware of giving them occasion to transgress the Lord's command and thus bring upon themselves His destruction; v. 19. **but thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden,** assign to each one his station, his place in the company of porters; v. 20. **but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered,** not even for a moment, while this work is being done, **lest they die.** By enforcing this regulation with the greatest strictness, the priests would be doing their share in preserving the life of the Kohathites, and their indifference might become a sin of omission which would be charged against them. The same rule applies to-day, Jas. 4, 17.

THE WORK OF THE GERSHONITES. — V. 21. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 22. **Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families;** v. 23. **from thirty**

years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them, when they, according to God's order, were fit for service; all that enter in to perform the service, literally, "to war the warfare," for their service was a branch of warfare for God, to do the work in the Tabernacle of the Congregation. V. 24. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens, in carrying a part of the paraphernalia of the Sanctuary; v. 25. and they shall bear the curtains of the Tabernacle, and the Tabernacle of the Congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, v. 26. and the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the Tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them; so shall they serve. Cp. chap. 3, 24—26. V. 27. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons, literally, "at his mouth," at his directions, shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service; and ye shall appoint unto them in charge of all their burdens. Both as porters on the way and in their work of assisting in the Sanctuary the Levites were strictly under the command of the priests, as directed by God. V. 28. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron, the priest.

THE WORK OF THE MERARITES. — V. 29. As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, muster them, take their census, by the house of their fathers; v. 30. from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, as enrolled in the ranks of the Lord's soldiers, to do the work of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. V. 31. And this is the charge of their burden, the appointments whose carrying was placed upon them as their ministry, according to all their service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation: the boards of the Tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, v. 32. and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service; and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden, count them off very carefully, lest one be overlooked. Cp. chap. 3, 36. 37. V. 33. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron, the priest, who was superintendent of this part of the work. The work of the Gospel ministry is also a good work, 1 Tim. 3, 1, and those that are engaged in preaching should comport themselves as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, in the spiritual warfare against the enemies of their faith, 1 Tim. 1, 18; Eph. 6, 10—18.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF THE LEVITES IN SERVICE. — V. 34. And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families and after the house of their fathers. V. 35. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service for the work in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, v. 36. and those that were numbered of them by their families, were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. V. 37. These were they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, being both of the right age and physically and mentally fit, which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses. V. 38. And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families and by the house of their fathers, v. 39. from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service for the work in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, v. 40. even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty. V. 41. These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the Lord. V. 42. And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, v. 43. from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, v. 44. even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred. V. 45. These be those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses. V. 46. All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers, v. 47. from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the Taber-

nacle of the Congregation, v. 48. even those that were numbered of them, marshaled and enrolled for duty, for helping in the work of carrying the Tabernacle and its equipment from one station to the next, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore (8,580), a number which is in just about the right proportion to the total mustering of the Levites. V. 49. According to the commandment of the Lord they were numbered by the hand of Moses, at his direction, every one according to his service and according to his burden, according to the things that were laid upon him at the mustering; thus were they numbered of him, as the Lord commanded Moses. They were told exactly what their individual duty consisted in, and could go ahead in an almost automatic manner. Such a wise distribution of burdens is to be recommended to this day in the Church of Christ; it makes for better work in the Lord's vineyard.

CHAPTER 5.

Regulations Concerning Persons Levitically Unclean and Morally Guilty.

Exclusion of the Levitically Unclean from the Camp. — V. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 2. Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, Lev. 13, 3. 46, and every one that hath an issue, Lev. 15, 2, and whosoever is defiled by the dead, by contact with a dead person, or, in some cases, by the mere presence in the house where a person dies, Lev. 21, 1; v. 3. both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them, (and this regulation was enforced even in the case of Miriam, chap. 12, 14,) that they defile not their camps, the plural being used here because the large encampment was divided into smaller camps, as ordered in chapter 2, in the midst whereof I dwell. V. 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp; as the Lord spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel. At a later day, in Canaan, this regulation was observed by assigning, at least to the lepers, a special district outside of the city to live.

Restitution in Trespasses. — V. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 6. Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty, v. 7. then they shall confess their sin which they have done; and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. The reference is to some form of trespass which concerned the neighbor's property, the guilt in that case consisting not only in depriving the neighbor of that which was his, but also in disturbing the relation of neighborliness in the people of God and thus in sinning directly against the Lord, Lev. 6, 1—7. V. 8. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, if he himself had died and there was no near relative to receive the ransom-money of the guilty one, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest, as the representative of the Lord; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him, Lev. 6, 6. 7. V. 9. And every offering, everything that the children of Israel lift off or take away from their property as a gift to the Sanctuary, of all the holy things of the children of Israel which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. This included all the gifts for the altar, especially the votive offerings and the firstlings. V. 10. And every man's hallowed things shall be his, that is, the priest's; whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his. Thus the needs of the priests were provided for by special legislation, whereas in the New Testament the Lord expects the law of love, governed by a living faith, to provide for His servants.

The Trial of Jealousy. — V. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 12. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside and commit a trespass against him, in transgressing the Sixth Commandment, v. 13. and a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband and be kept close, the sinful happening or relation be covered over by the guilty woman, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner, caught in the act, v. 14. and the spirit of jealousy come upon him, her husband, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled, whether his suspicions have a good foundation or not: v. 15. then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. This passage is included at this point of the legislation because it concerned the preserving of the nation's purity as the army of Jehovah. The husband's suspicion, whether justified or not, endangered the life of the family, and whether the man, in a fit of

anger, was inclined to repudiate his wife, although she was innocent, or whether he, in case she was guilty, winked at her transgression and continued to live with her, although he regarded her as a common harlot, the danger to the nation's morals was the same. V. 16. **And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord,** formally place her in the docket as one accused of such a heinous transgression; v. 17. **and the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor of the Tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water,** to remind those witnessing the act of the deep shame and humiliation which accompanies a transgression of the nature here concerned; v. 18. **and the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head,** loosen her hair as a symbol of the suspicion of unfaithfulness and of the suspension of the husband's protection for the time being, **and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering,** the barley signifying the suspicious character of the behavior of which she is accused, and she herself, as it were, holding in her hands the fruit of her actions and placing it before the Lord for judgment. **And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse,** to signify that, if she be guilty, the bitter suffering of God's curse would strike her; v. 19. **and the priest shall charge her by an oath and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband,** literally, "if thou hast not been dissolute unto uncleanness while under thy husband," namely, as his lawful wife, **be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse;** v. 20. **but if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband,** in the act which is permitted only in lawful wedlock, v. 21. **then the priest,** continuing his adjuration, **shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot,** to waste away, **and thy belly to swell,** those organs which are the seat of procreation; v. 22. **and this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell and thy thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, Amen, amen,** thus agreeing to the oath and calling down its curse upon her in case she were guilty. V. 23. **And the priest shall write these curses in a book,** on a small writing-tablet, **and he shall blot them out with the bitter water,** wash them off so as to make them a component of the water of cursing; v. 24. **and he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse,** that is, after the offering of the sacrifice; **and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her and become bitter.** V. 25. **Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar;** v. 26. **and the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.** Her oath had cleansed her from the suspicion of adultery at least to this extent that she was able to make her offering, to place it before the holy God with a feeling of outraged innocence. V. 27. **And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her and become bitter,** cause bitter pains and excessive suffering, in an illness laid upon the woman as a direct punishment of the Lord, **and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot; and the woman shall be a curse among her people,** as an adulteress struck down by the wrath of God. V. 28. **And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then she shall be free,** not be visited by the punishment of God, and free to hold up her head among the members of her people, **and shall conceive seed,** have the ability to bear children. This shows that the trial of jealousy was by no means so one-sided as some writers would have it, for the innocent wife, outraged to the quick by the suspicions voiced by her husband, could insist upon this public justification of herself, to the deep humiliation of the man unjustly accusing her. V. 29. **This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled;** v. 30. **or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.** V. 31. **Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity,** if his suspicions or his accusation is well founded, **and this woman shall bear her iniquity.** In the New Testament ordeals of this nature are unknown, but all Christians will bear in mind the necessity of keeping their sexual life unspotted, whether they live in holy wedlock or outside of it.

CHAPTER 6.

The Law of the Nazarites.

THE NAZARITE VOWS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When either man or woman,** for the sex made no difference in the case of such a vow, the only restrictions being given in chapter 30, **shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord,** to live as men and women devoted to the Lord, as a special expression of piety, v. 3. **he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink,** the latter being a very intoxicating liquor made from barley, dates, and honey, **and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes,** the fresh, sweet grape-juice, as it comes from the press, **nor eat moist grapes,** as they come from the vine, **or dried,** in the form of raisins. V. 4. **All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk,** the prohibition with reference to foods or drinks made from grapes being absolute, as pertaining to the sensual delights with which the Nazarite had nothing to do; he was to be as remote as possible from the spirit of drunkenness. V. 5. **All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head,** for the free-growing head of hair was to serve as the symbol of the proper enthusiasm in its steady strength; **until the days be fulfilled in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy,** consecrated, set aside to the Lord, **and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow,** the symbol of the higher, divine power of life. V. 6. **All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body,** not become contaminated by contact with it. V. 7. **He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die,** being, in this respect, like the high priest, Lev. 21, 11, **because the consecration of his God is upon his head.** The prohibition of the greater, of course, included the less, and the Nazarite was under obligation to guard against every form of contamination. V. 8. **All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord.** V. 9. **And if any man die very suddenly by him,** without premonition or previous warning, **and he,** the Nazarite, **hath defiled the head of his consecration,** his unshorn head being the diadem of his God, the visible sign of his consecrated condition, **then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it,** for that was the day always chosen for purposes of purification. V. 10. **And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons,** as in the case of Levitical uncleanness, Lev. 15, 14, **to the priest, to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation;** v. 11. **and the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him,** reestablish the right relation between the worshiper and Jehovah, **for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head the same day,** consecrate it to the Lord for a second time, for unhindered growth. V. 12. **And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation,** begin his period of consecration anew, **and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering,** to absolve the worshiper from all guilt; **but the days that were before shall be lost,** shall not count for the fulfilment of the vow, **because his separation was defiled.** For a Christian there are no unusual periods of special sanctification, although we observe certain outward times of particular devotion to the Lord, but his whole life is devoted to the service of his heavenly Father and of his Savior, Jesus Christ.

THE NAZARITE SACRIFICES. — V. 13. **And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled,** when he has completed the period for which his vow was in force: **He shall be brought unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** v. 14. **and he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he-lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe-lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin-offering,** the former to establish complete fellowship between Jehovah and the worshiper, the latter to atone for any sins of weakness that may have happened during the period of separation, **and one ram without blemish for peace-offerings,** v. 15. **and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil,** as they were prescribed for every peace-offering, Lev. 7, 12, **and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings,** as they pertained to the burnt offerings and to the peace-offerings, in the form of flour, oil, and wine, chap. 15, 3—15. V. 16. **And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin-offering and his burnt offering;** v. 17. **and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall offer also his meat-offering and his drink-offering.** V. 18. **And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation,** the head of hair which had so long remained unshorn as a token of his devotion to Jehovah, **at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the**

peace-offerings, thus dedicating the ornamental covering of his head entirely to Jehovah. V. 19. **And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder**, the upper part of the fore quarter, **of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven; v. 20. and the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord. This is holy for the priest, with the wave-breast and heave-shoulder**, Ex. 29, 27. 28. **And after that the Nazarite may drink wine**, he is absolved from the external obligations attending his vow. V. 21. **This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the Lord for his separation, beside that that his hand shall get**, whatever else he may afford in the line of gifts to Jehovah; **according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.** Nazarite vows are not enjoined in the New Testament, but it may often serve for a Christian's self-discipline if he practises some form of self-denial, especially if there are many people in need of assistance.

THE FORM OF PUBLIC BLESSING. — V. 22. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying**, v. 23. **Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel**, especially at the time of dismissal at the end of worship, Lev. 9, 22, **saying unto them**, v. 24. **The Lord bless thee and keep thee.** This first strophe of the blessing forms the general foundation of the entire benediction, of the whole salvation brought to men by revelation. The blessing of Jehovah should be upon them, give to them all prosperity in material and spiritual things in full and rich measure. This includes that He will turn aside every curse, ward off every adversity from those that are His. The providence of God, both in granting blessings and in hindering misfortunes, is thus invoked. V. 25. **The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.** While the face of Jehovah is terrible upon those that oppose Him and strikes down His enemies with the rays of His glory, it is full of the richest and warmest sunlight of salvation to those that turn to Him in faith, Ps. 27, 1; 43, 3; 44, 4. But the greatest beauty of this light consists in the fact that it throws rays of mercy into the heart that sighs for mercy and forgiveness. It is the grace of God in the redemption of Jesus Christ that blots out all guilt. V. 26 **The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.** From the position of being raised up above the believer and shedding forth the rays of His merciful blessing, the warmth of the love of God sinks down upon the sinner and penetrates his entire being with its miraculous power. The aim of this work on the part of Jehovah is to give to the believer His peace, His salvation. The children of God should have the full assurance that all strife is now a thing of the past, that they are forever rescued out of all the distress and curse of sin and its consequences. The threefold blessing reminds us of the Trinity of the Godhead and of the threefold form of the work of God's goodness and mercy in dealing with His children. There can be no doubt, therefore, that we are justified in finding here a statement of the Trinity of God.2) V. 27. **And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.** The blessing, as spoken by the priest, was not a mere pious wish, but it actually transmitted the divine power of blessing to the people. Every Israelite that believed these words as pronounced upon him went to his home with the blessing of the Lord resting upon him. To this day the members of the congregation are dismissed with the words of this blessing, and should take home with them the merciful goodness of the Triune God, especially the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins.

2) *Syn.-Ber.*, Westl. Dist., 1909, 14; Luther, 3, 1369.

CHAPTER 7.

The Gifts of the Princes.

The incident which is here related took place just after the Tabernacle had been erected, its equipment put into place, and the entire Sanctuary with all its furniture consecrated to the Lord, Lev. 8—10. In order not to interrupt the connection of the legislation, Moses inserted the story of this important happening at this point. V. 1. **And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the Tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them**, v. 2. **that the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered**, the same ones that are mentioned chap. 1, 5—15 as having been in actual charge of the census, **offered.** V. 3. **And they brought their offering before the Lord: six covered wagons**, probably on the order of our prairie schooners of a few decades ago, **and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox; and they brought them before the Tabernacle.** V. 4. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying**, v. 5. **Take it of them that they**

may be to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service, according to the work which he was expected to perform in moving the Tabernacle and its equipment from one station to another. V. 6. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, accepted them for the Lord, and gave them unto the Levites, placed them at their disposal. V. 7. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon according to their service, for they were entrusted with the transportation of the lighter articles, the various coverings with the exception of the veil of the Most Holy Place; v. 8. and four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, for they had charge of the transportation of the heavy planks and pillars, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron, the priest. V. 9. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none, because the service of the Sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders; they carried the furniture and the holy vessels on bearing-poles. V. 10. And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, in things which were necessary for the dedicating of the altar, even the princes offered their offering before the altar. V. 11. And the Lord said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, to be used at once, and on consecutive days, lest the amount be too great for the priests to handle at one time, for the dedicating of the altar. V. 12. And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah; v. 13. and his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels (a little more than four pounds), one silver bowl of seventy shekels (somewhat more than two pounds), after the shekel of the Sanctuary, that is, standard weight; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering, all ready for the sacrifice; v. 14. one spoon, or paten, of ten shekels of gold (at 253 grains each), full of incense; v. 15. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, less than a year old, for a burnt offering; v. 16. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, Lev. 4, 23; v. 17. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab. V. 18. On the second day Nethaneel, the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer. V. 19. He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 20. one spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 21. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 22. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 23. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Nethaneel, the son of Zuar. V. 24. On the third day Eliab, the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, did offer; v. 25. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 26. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 27. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 28. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 29. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Eliab, the son of Helon. V. 30. On the fourth day Elizur, the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, did offer; v. 31. his offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 32. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 33. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 34. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 35. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Elizur, the son of Shedeur. V. 36. On the fifth day Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, did offer; v. 37. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 38. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 39. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 40. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 41. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai. V. 42. On the sixth day Eliasaph, the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, offered; v. 43. his offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full

of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 44. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 45. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 46. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 47. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Eliasaph, the son of Deuel. V. 48. On the seventh day Elishama, the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, offered; v. 49. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 50. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 51. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 52. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 53. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Elishama, the son of Ammihud. V. 54. On the eighth day offered Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh; v. 55. his offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 56. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 57. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 58. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 59. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur. V. 60. On the ninth day Abidan, the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, offered; v. 61. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 62. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 63. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 64. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 65. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Abidan, the son of Gideoni. V. 66. On the tenth day Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, offered; v. 67. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 68. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 69. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 70. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 71. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai. V. 72. On the eleventh day Pagiel, the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, offered; v. 73. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 74. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 75. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 76. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 77. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Pagiel, the son of Ocran. V. 78. On the twelfth day Ahira, the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, offered; v. 79. his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering; v. 80. one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; v. 81. one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; v. 82. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; v. 83. and for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Ahira, the son of Enan. So all the tribes of the children of Israel were equally represented in these initiatory sacrifices and gifts, both as to their number and as to their value. They all had an equal share in the altar, and an equal interest in the sacrifices that were offered upon it. V. 84. This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold; v. 85. each charger of silver weighing an hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy; all the silver bowls weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary (about seventy-five pounds); v. 86. the golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the Sanctuary; all the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels (worth

almost $1,200). V. 87. **All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat-offering; and the kids of the goats for sin-offering twelve.** V. 88. **And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace-offerings were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he-goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This was the dedication of the altar after that it was anointed.** V. 89. **And when Moses was gone into the Tabernacle of the Congregation to speak with Him,** to commune with the Lord, **then he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the Mercy-seat that was upon the Ark of Testimony,** for there it was that God condescended to communicate with His servant, Ex. 25, 22, **from between the two cherubim; and He spake unto him,** this being the usual form of revelation and communication during the wilderness journey.

CHAPTER 8.

The Cleansing of the Levites.

The Lighting of the Sanctuary Lamps. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto Aaron and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps,** apparently the chief daily function of the high priest in those days, and a very important part of the officiating priest's work at a later period, **the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.** Cp. Ex. 25, 37. The lamps were to be placed in their sockets on the candlestick in such a manner as to throw their light toward the front, thereby illuminating the Holy Place. This custom has a very definite significance in this connection, for Israel was at all times to be such a people before the Lord as to let its light shine in the darkness of this world. V. 3. **And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick,** so that they shone forward or toward the east from the veil which screened the Most Holy Place, **as the Lord commanded Moses.** V. 4. **And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold,** of fine chased work, **unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work,** Ex. 25, 31—39; **according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick.** Stress is again laid upon the fact that the candlestick conformed exactly to the pattern which Moses saw on the mountain.

The Purifying of the Levites. — V. 5. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 6. **Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.** This was done in order to take from them any Levitical defilement and to set them apart as a body of servants for the ministry of the Tabernacle. V. 7. **And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them,** probably water mingled with the ashes of the sin-offering, Lev. 3, 12, the act being symbolical of the washing from sins and impurities of every kind, **and let them shave all their flesh,** pass over their entire body with a razor, **and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean,** the rite thus being neither so solemn nor so comprehensive as in the case of the priests. V. 8. **Then let them take a young bullock with his meat-offering, even fine flour mingled with oil,** for so it was prescribed, Lev. 2, 1; **and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering.** Cp. Lev. 4. V. 9. **And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** in the eastern part of the court, facing the altar of burnt offering; **and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together,** especially in its chief representatives; v. 10. **and thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord,** formally present them before the face of Jehovah by having them line up before the altar of burnt offering; **and the children of Israel,** through their representatives, **shall put their hands upon the Levites,** thus confessing the obligation of all the people in the service of Jehovah in their first-born sons and transferring this obligation to the Levites as the representatives of the first-born. V. 11. **And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord,** in a gesture of waving, whereby they were transferred from the position of ordinary members of the congregation to that of God's servants in a peculiar sense, **for an offering of the children of Israel,** for that is the meaning the ceremony intended to convey to the onlooker, **that they may execute the service of the Lord,** become a part of that army of Jehovah, of His true soldiers, that waged a spiritual warfare in His interest. "Most likely Aaron pointed to the Levites, and then waved his hands as in ordinary cases of making the offering." V. 12. **And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks,** in the usual gesture conveying their own guilt to the sacrificial animals; **and thou shalt offer the one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites,** and thus to bring them into the proper relationship of most intimate fellowship with Jehovah. V. 13. **And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron and before his sons,** for it was as their assistants that they were mainly to serve, **and offer**

them for an offering unto the Lord. V. 14. **Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be Mine.** V. 15. **And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** in performing their ministrations in the court and in transporting the Sanctuary from one station to the next; **and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering.** These verses are a further explication of the preceding passage, for the Lord wanted it clearly understood what the position of the Levites was in the midst of the congregation. V. 16. **For they are wholly given unto Me from among the children of Israel,** offered to Jehovah by the entire people as their representatives; **instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the first-born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto Me.** V. 17. **For all the first-born of the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast,** the Lord having an exclusive claim upon them for His service. **On the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for Myself.** V. 18. **And I have taken the Levites for,** in the place or stead of, **all the first-born of the children of Israel.** V. 19. **And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel to do the service of the children of Israel,** that which should have been performed by them in their first-born, **in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel; that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come nigh unto the Sanctuary.** By their representative service the Levites constituted an atonement for the children of Israel, for the latter were restrained by this arrangement from approaching near to the Sanctuary and thus bringing a calamity upon themselves. V. 20. **And Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites according unto all that the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites; so did the children of Israel unto them.** V. 21. **And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the Lord; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.** V. 22. **And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation before Aaron and before his sons,** under whose immediate direction they worked; **as the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.** While there is no hierarchy by divine appointment in the New Testament, ministers and teachers are nevertheless engaged in the business of the Lord in a peculiar sense, as overseers over the Lord's flock.

THE AGE AT WHICH THE LEVITES SERVED. — V. 23. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 24. **This is it that belongeth unto the Levites,** this is the special regulation fixing the age limit of the Levites: **from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** be engaged in the ministry connected with the Lord's Sanctuary; v. 25. **and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof and shall serve no more,** not be obliged to do the heavy work connected with the transport of the Tabernacle; v. 26. **but shall minister with their brethren in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to keep the charge,** have the supervision over the furniture and the vessels of the Sanctuary, **and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge,** with regard to all the services which they were to perform. It was not a complete retirement which the Levites suffered, but they were relieved of the more difficult manual and physical labor connected with the offering of the sacrifices and with the service of the Tabernacle. David later modified these regulations by having all the Levites serve from the time they were twenty years old, 1 Chron. 23, 24. 25, and this ordinance remained in power while the kingdom of Judah existed.

CHAPTER 9.

Celebration of the Passover. The Guiding Cloud.

THE PASSOVER PROPER. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt,** saying, v. 2. **Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season.** It was true, indeed, that the Lord had instituted the Passover as a memorial before the Lord forever, Ex. 12, 14, but there was a possibility of the people's understanding the command as referring to the time of their living in Canaan only, Ex. 12, 25. So the Lord at this time, immediately after the erection of the Tabernacle, Ex. 40, 2. 17, repeated the command enjoining the regular celebration of the festival, at that same certain time which had been set for that purpose. V. 3. **In the fourteenth day of this month, at even,** literally, "between the two evenings," Ex. 12, 6, **ye shall keep it in his appointed season; according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.**

The essential feature of the festival, the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, remained throughout the ages, even after the ceremonies which were peculiar to the first celebration in Egypt, such as the eating of the meal attired in traveling dress and the painting of the door-posts and lintels with blood, had been discontinued. V. 4. **And Moses spake unto the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover.** V. 5. **And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.** It is a striking feature of the narrative at this time that it refers time and again to the obedience of the Israelites. It was the time of their first love. The great test of believers at all times is their steadfastness after the force of the first mighty impetus is spent, Rev. 2, 4.

THE SUBSTITUTE FESTIVAL, OR LITTLE PASSOVER. — V. 6. **And there were certain men,** probably Mishael and Elizaphan, Lev. 10, 4. 5, **who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the Passover on that day,** Lev. 19, 28; **and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day;** v. 7. **and those men said unto him, We are defiled,** Levitically unclean, **by the dead body of a man; wherefore are we kept back,** literally, "shortened," not given our full rights and privileges, **that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel?** They had reference to the precept which excluded the Levitically unclean from offering a sacrifice and from partaking in a sacrificial meal, Lev. 7, 21. V. 8. **And Moses said unto them, Stand still,** have patience, **and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.** He made use of careful prudence in dealing with these men and with the situation in which they found themselves, lest hasty advice should meet with the Lord's disapproval. V. 9. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** in answer to his inquiry, **saying,** v. 10. **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity,** for this was to be a standing rule, **shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off,** the former possibility, of course, including every form of temporary Levitical uncleanness, **yet he shall keep the Passover unto the Lord,** not merely as a privilege, but as a duty. V. 11. **The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it,** just one month later than the Passover proper, **and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs,** Ex. 12, 8. V. 12. **They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it,** Ex. 12, 10. 46; **according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.** Since the celebration of the Passover was a sign of Israel's close fellowship with God, its solemnity had to be insisted upon, also in the Little Passover. V. 13. **But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the Passover,** deliberately neglects this solemn religious duty, **even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people,** not only by excommunication, but by death, **because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season; that man shall bear his sin.** This provision effectually hindered all indifference with regard to the celebration of the Passover. V. 14. **And if a stranger shall sojourn among you and will keep the Passover unto the Lord,** after submitting to the rite of circumcision, Ex. 12, 48. 49, **according to the ordinance of the Passover and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do,** be put on equal terms with, and treated exactly like, a born Jew; **ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.** Note that it is not a sign of weakness, but of faithfulness, in a pastor if he asks for time to consult Scriptures before rendering an opinion in a difficult matter.

THE CLOUD OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE. — V. 15. **And on the day that the Tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the Tabernacle, namely, the Tent of the Testimony,** Ex. 40, 34; **and at even there was upon the Tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire until the morning.** It was not a pillar of physical, earthly fire, but the brightness of the Lord's presence, as He kept watch over His people in the midst of the camp. The Tabernacle is called the Tent of Testimony because the two tables of the Law, of the witness of the Lord to His people, were kept in the Ark of the Covenant, in the Most Holy Place. V. 16. **So it was alway,** not only on the day of the dedication of the Tabernacle; **the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night.** V. 17. **And when the cloud was taken up from the Tabernacle,** immediately after its removal, which was a signal to all the people, **then after that the children of Israel journeyed,** they struck their tents and set forth in their armies; **and in the place where the cloud abode,** where it sank to the ground, **there the children of Israel pitched their tents.** V. 18. **At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched,** they observed the signals of the cloud as He had told them; **as long as the cloud abode upon the Tabernacle, they rested in tents,** they remained in camp. V. 19. **And when the cloud tarried long upon the Tabernacle many days,** if it extended its resting over a long period of time, **then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not,** they observed that which was given them to observe by the Lord, attending to His worship, Lev. 8, 35. V. 20.

And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the Tabernacle, a number of days which was quickly counted; **according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.** V. 21. **And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning,** only overnight, **and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed; whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.** V. 22. **Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the Tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed.** V. 23. **At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed; they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.** This detailed description of the manner of signaling to the entire host and of the unquestioning obedience rendered by the people serves to emphasize not only the dependence of the children of Israel upon the Lord, but especially His providential care for them. Every believer that places himself under the gracious direction of the Lord in all matters pertaining to his life will find this to his temporal and eternal advantage.

CHAPTER 10.

The Silver Trumpets. The Journey Continued.

THE USE OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them;** they were apparently straight trumpets, made of wrought silver, in chased work; **that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly and for the journeying of the camps.** These trumpets were intended to give all the official signals to the army of God, but their chief purpose was to sound the signal for departure. Those pictured on the triumphal arch of Titus at Rome may not have been the original ones, but they were undoubtedly exact copies of those used for so many centuries by the Jewish people. V. 3. **And when they shall blow with them,** that is, with both at the same time, **all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** for a meeting of all the people. V. 4. **And if they,** the priests, **blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel,** chap. 1, 5—16; Ex. 18, 21, **shall gather themselves unto thee.** This distinction could easily be remembered. V. 5. **When ye blow an alarm,** in a protracted peal or blast, **then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward,** the tribes under the leadership of Judah, which formed the vanguard of the entire army. V. 6. **When ye blow an alarm,** a protracted peal, **the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey,** the tribes under the leadership of Reuben; **they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.** V. 7. **But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow,** in single, interrupted blasts, on both trumpets, **but ye shall not sound an alarm.** V. 8. **And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets,** it was a function which could be discharged by them only; **and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations,** the trumpets should be used by all their descendants, so long as their church would endure. V. 9. **And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets,** long-drawn blasts intended to call the people together and to inspire them with courage in shaking off the yoke of tyranny; **and ye shall be remembered before the Lord, your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies;** the peals of the trumpets, assisted by the prayers of the faithful, would bring the people into the gracious remembrance of the Lord, who would help them against their oppressors. V. 10. **Also in the day of your gladness,** upon occasions of great joy, **and in your solemn days,** at the times when they were directed to have solemn assemblies, **and in the beginnings of your months,** on the new moon, **ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings,** this being the distinguishing mark of the festival sacrifices on the occasions noted; **that they may be to you for a memorial before your God,** to bring the people and their offerings into remembrance before Jehovah. **I am the Lord, your God.** As the silver trumpets were subsequently used by the children of Israel, not only in sounding for the attack in battle, but on all festival occasions, so the bells of the Christian churches proclaim and celebrate the sacred days and seasons, the times set aside for the public proclamation and learning of the Gospel.

THE DEPARTURE FROM SINAI. — V. 11. **And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year,** after the departure from Egypt, **that the cloud was taken up from off the Tabernacle of the Testimony,** as a signal for striking the camp

and moving on to the next station. V. 12. **And the children of Israel took their journeys,** they set forth on the continuation of their trip, **out of the Wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested,** came to rest **in the Wilderness of Paran,** the general direction of the march at this time being northward. The Wilderness of Paran is the great central plateau of the Sinaitic Peninsula, and shows the characteristic physical features of the entire country between Egypt and Canaan, rugged mountain ranges being traversed by desolate valleys, in some of which intermittent streams are found. V. 13. **And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses,** this being the first time since the giving of the Law that its precepts were carried out in a departure. V. 14. **In the first place,** as the vanguard of the entire army, **went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies; and over his host was Nahshon, the son of Amminadab.** V. 15. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethaneel, the son of Zuar.** V. 16. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab, the son of Helon.** Cp. chap. 2, 3—9. V. 17. **And the Tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the Tabernacle,** that is, the curtains and the framework of both the tent and the court, which they transported on the wagons furnished by the princes of the people, chap. 7, 6—8. V. 18. **And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies; and over his host was Elizur, the son of Shedeur.** V. 19. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai.** V. 20. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph, the son of Deuel.** Cp. chap. 2, 10—16. V. 21. **And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the Sanctuary,** the sacred furniture and the holy vessels, chap. 7, 9; **and the other,** the Gershonites and the Merarites, **did set up the Tabernacle against they came** (until they reached the place). This was the reason why these two companies of Levites preceded the tribes led by the Reubenites, cp. chap. 2, 17, since they thereby gained enough time to have the tent erected before the Kohathites came with the furniture, the altars and the holy vessels. V. 22. **And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies; and over his host was Elishama, the son of Ammihud.** V. 23. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur.** V. 24. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan, the son of Gideoni.** Cp. chap. 2, 18—24. V. 25. **And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rearward of all the camps throughout their hosts; and over his host was Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai.** V. 26. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel, the son of Ocran.** V. 27. **And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira, the son of Enan.** Cp. chap. 2, 25—31. V. 28. **Thus were the journeyings of the children of Israel according to their armies, when they set forward.** It was all done decently and in order, without confusion and loss of time. Those that know and fear God do not live according to their own desire, but according to God's will and command, following His leadership in everything.

HOBAB PERSUADED TO JOIN THE HOST.—V. 29. **And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law,** (Hobab thus being the brother-in-law of Moses, but the manner of his coming into the camp is not related,) **We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good;** in being associated with the people of the Lord, Hobab and his tribe would become a partaker of the spiritual blessings which the Lord had promised to His people; **for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel,** Gen. 32, 12; Ex. 19, 5. 6. V. 30. **And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land and to my kindred.** There were strong ties which bound Hobab to the place where his people lived, but the prospect of partaking in the glorious destiny that Jehovah had promised to His people was a mighty persuasive factor. V. 31. **And he** (Moses) **said, Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.** The cloud which went ahead of the army showed only the general direction of the way, whereas Hobab could act as the guide of the people in showing them the best roads and in planning their camps, since he had lived under wilderness conditions all his life and was familiar with the entire country. V. 32. **And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.** By joining the people of the Lord, Hobab and his people would share in all the temporal and spiritual benefits which the Lord had promised to His chosen nation. The words of Moses apparently did not lack in persuasive power at this time, for it seems that Hobab joined the host with his tribe, Judg. 1, 16. The passage contains a fine hint in regard to missionary methods which might be applied to this day. V. 33. **And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey,** during which time nothing of interest happened, the people seemingly being satisfied with

everything that the Lord did; **and the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting-place for them,** a suitable camping-ground for the entire army. It seems that the ark alone was taken from the rest of the Sanctuary appointments and carried at the head of the host, as near as possible beneath the cloud. V. 34. **And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day,** like a sheltering presence, covering the whole army, **when they went out of the camp,** concentrating itself into a pillar as the journey was resumed. V. 35. **And it came to pass, when the ark set forward,** at the beginning of the day's march, **that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.** This was said with reference to the ark and the cloud as guaranteeing the merciful presence of Jehovah, before whom all enemies must be confounded and flee in disgrace. V. 36. **And when it rested,** when the cloud sank to the earth upon reaching a new station, and the ark was deposited on the spot where the Tabernacle was to be erected in the midst of the camp, **he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel!** Cp. Ps. 68, 1—3. This is an expression of the bold confidence of faith, a prayer which is sure of being heard in advance, a watchword with which the Church of Christ at all times has overcome and vanquished the forces of darkness. And every individual Christian knows that God guards and keeps him in all his ways and defends him from all harm and danger even in the night season.

CHAPTER 11.

The People Murmur and Are Punished.

THE BURNING AT TABERAH. — V. 1. **And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord;** literally, "when the people were voicing their complaints over evil in the ears of Jehovah"; for the discomforts and inconveniences of even these three days of desert journey caused them to groan and to murmur. **And the Lord heard it,** although at this time it was still done more in secret, Ps. 78, 18; **and His anger was kindled,** like a fire that flares up suddenly; **and the fire of the Lord,** sent in a supernatural way as a punishment upon them, **burned among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp,** probably in the same manner as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10, 2. The mysterious, consuming fire started at the edges of the encampment and was threatening to devour all the people. V. 2. **And the people cried unto Moses,** their terror made them turn to the one man who had shown himself their ready champion at all times; **and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched,** it sank down and went out, the purpose of the Lord in filling the people with a wholesome fear having been accomplished. V. 3. **And he** (Moses) **called the name of the place Taberah,** that is, burning, or, place of burning, **because the fire of the Lord burned among them.** This was only one part, or section, of the camp, but it lived in the memory of the people, Deut. 9, 22. When the children of the Lord murmur against His dispensations, He finds it necessary occasionally to visit them with severe punishments; but if they then cry to Him with sorrowful and repentant hearts, He turns to them again with the fulness of His grace and mercy.

THE PEOPLE LUST FOR FLESH. — V. 4. **And the mixed multitude that was among them,** the camp-followers, the rabble that had joined the host of Israel when the Lord led His people forth, **fell a-lusting,** was seized with a violent longing for some of the sensual delights that lay behind them; **and the children of Israel,** to whom the dissatisfied feeling soon spread, **also wept again,** remarked with reference to Ex. 16, 3, **and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?** They still had their herds and flocks, but the consumption of meat from these animals had to be reduced in the wilderness; moreover, their appetite was whetted for other delicacies. V. 5. **We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely,** for nothing, as they state in dissatisfied exaggeration; **the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic,** the form of the enumeration showing with what a longing they thought of these delights of the stomach; v. 6. **but now our soul is dried away,** an expression intended to convey the utmost disgust and loathing; **there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.** Their lustful desire demanded rich and appetizing foods and a more frequent change in the bill of fare. V. 7. **And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium.** V. 8. **And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills,** in the small hand-mills such as were in use in the Orient, Matt. 24, 41, **or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil,** like choice pastry made with oil. V. 9. **And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.** Cp. Ex. 16, 14. 15. 31. This notice concerning the manna as a very acceptable, delicious food is here inserted by Moses to show the base ingratitude of the people. It is equally base and damnable ingratitude, if Christians become tired of the food of the Gospel and express their loathing by word or deed.

Moses is Given Assistants. — V. 10. **Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent,** for the contagion of dissatisfaction had spread throughout the camp like a virulent pestilence; **and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.** With this second outbreak of dissatisfaction, Moses felt the whole wrath of God in his inmost soul, and he feared that his entire mission was a failure. V. 11. **And Moses said unto the Lord,** in his deep grief at the turn of events, **Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in Thy sight that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?** He felt that the care of the entire people in governing and leading them was so grievous as to seem an unmerciful treatment on the part of God. This was the language of despondency, not of the kind that murmurs against the Lord in secret, but of that which seeks help and strength from Him alone. It is the complaint of weakness, but not the grumbling of unbelief. V. 12. **Have I conceived all this people, have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child,** the nurse taking care of the helpless infant, **unto the land which Thou swarest unto their fathers?** It was not natural, it was not meet that Moses should bear the responsibility for the entire people alone; he meant to imply that God, as the Creator and Father of Israel, Ex. 4, 22; Is. 63, 16, should make some provision by which he, a poor weak man, might be relieved of his great burden. V. 13. **Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat.** They behaved like screaming, self-willed infants, who will not listen to reason. V. 14. **I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me;** his feeble strength could not hold up the burden which had been laid upon him. V. 15. **And if Thou deal thus with me,** if the Lord really intended that he should continue bearing the burden, **kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand,** at once, without further torture, **if I have found favor in Thy sight,** for death would be a merciful deliverance in the circumstances; **and let me not see my wretchedness,** this great misfortune, which would surely kill him by inches. The experience of Moses and his manner of acting is that of many spiritual leaders of the people to this day, if all their efforts in behalf of the souls entrusted to them meet with little or no appreciation. Fortunate is the man who at that time turns to the Lord, even with an importunate prayer, and lays the matter entirely in the hands of Him who rules all things. V. 16. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them,** men who had held these offices by virtue of the arrangement in force at that time, Ex. 18, 13—26; **and bring them unto the Tabernacle of the Congregation that they may stand there with thee.** V. 17. **And I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them,** not that Moses would possess so much less of the spirit of wisdom, but that they would all be kindled with the flame of the same understanding; **and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee that thou bear it not thyself alone.** V. 18. **And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh,** they would have their longing satisfied; **for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt; therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.** It was a command rather than a concession, as here made. V. 19. **Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;** v. 20. **but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you,** until the very thought of flesh would nauseate them; **because that ye have despised the Lord, which is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?** The very tone in which the request of the people was granted should have sounded a warning to them and called them to true repentance. V. 21. **And Moses said, The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen,** so many able-bodied men alone; **and Thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month.** This was apparently not doubt on the part of Moses, but an expression of surprise and a hint that he would like to know in what way this would be accomplished. V. 22. **Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them?** Would that be enough to satisfy this demand? **Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?** V. 23. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short,** shorter than it has been, in not being able to reach the people and in helping them in their real needs? **Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not.** Jehovah refused Moses an explanation as to the form of the intended miracle; He demanded of His servant unconditional faith in His almighty power and in the efficacy of His promises. And Moses believed and obeyed. V. 24. **And Moses went out,** namely, from the Tabernacle, where he had brought his complaint before the Lord, **and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of**

the people, and set them round about the Tabernacle, probably in a semicircle, on the side facing the east. V. 25. **And the Lord came down in a cloud and spake unto him,** the cloud, which ordinarily stood still above the tent, sank down to its door, and Jehovah addressed His servant, **and took of the Spirit that was upon him and gave it unto the seventy elders,** filled them with the same wisdom and understanding which characterized Moses, though not in the same degree. **And it came to pass that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease;** for that one time they were filled with a peculiar ecstasy wrought by the Holy Spirit, which caused them to utter inspired messages. V. 26. **But there remained two of the men in the camp,** of the elders who should have been at the Tabernacle; **the name of the one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad; and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written,** their names were included in the list made by Moses, **but went not out unto the Tabernacle; and they prophesied in the camp.** V. 27. **And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp;** it was such an unusual occurrence that he thought a report should be made. V. 28. **And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.** He believed that the prophesying done by these men was a presumptuous act on their part. But Moses quenched his mistaken zeal, as the Lord did upon a similar occasion, Mark 9, 38. 39. V. 29. **And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!** As a true servant of God, who was not jealous for his own honor, but desired only the extension of God's influence and power, Moses wished only for a further extension of the Lord's gift of grace. A little more of this same Spirit in our days would help to solve many of the problems of the Church. V. 30. **And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel;** they all returned to their own tents, which were at some distance from the Tabernacle. Moses had his assistants, and he felt the relief. At present the Lord also gives understanding and wisdom to the men that are holding various offices in the Church, if they but use proper meekness in their work.

QUAILS ARE SENT. — V. 31. **And there went forth a wind from the Lord,** a miraculous wind from the southeast, Ps. 78, 26, **and brought quails from the sea,** from the Elanitic Gulf, the eastern branch of the Red Sea, **and let them fall by the camp,** caused them to alight in helpless confusion, **as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side,** in an area which was about a day's journey square, **round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high** (about 42 inches) **upon the face of the earth.** This, of course, exceeded any amount which an ordinary spring migration might have brought up from the south; it was a miracle of the Lord. V. 32. **And the people stood up all that day and all that night and all the next day, and they gathered the quails; he that gathered least gathered ten homers** (more than eighty bushels). **And they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp,** namely, to dry them in the sun and thus to get their fill of flesh food for which they had been longing. V. 33. **And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed,** before the meal was finished, **the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague,** by an unusual and very severe judgment, which struck down a great multitude. V. 34. **And he** (Moses) **called the name of that place,** not only of one section, but of the entire encampment, **Kibroth-hattaavah** (graves of lust); **because there they buried the people that lusted.** V. 35. **And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth,** spent some time at this station. To this day it arouses the anger of God if men abuse His gifts merely for the purpose of gratifying their sensual lusts. We should not lust as the Israelites lusted, for the same punishment may come upon us, 1 Cor. 10, 6.

CHAPTER 12.

The Murmuring of Miriam and Aaron.

THE SIN OF MIRIAM AND AARON. — V. 1. **And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses,** they also became infected with the virus of discontent, **because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman,** a Cushite, his first wife, Zipporah, apparently having died in the wilderness. Marriage with an Egyptian woman was not forbidden, but Miriam, and under her leadership Aaron also, took this opportunity of registering their jealousy of their brother's position among the people of the Lord, since the prestige of Moses had been established more firmly than ever by reason of the recent happenings. V. 2. **And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath He not spoken also by us?** Miriam, as the prophetess, Ex. 15, 20, thought herself and her brother Aaron, as the high priest and the

bearer of the mysterious light and truth, Ex. 28, 30, entitled to a share in the teaching of the people; they wanted to have equal rights with their younger brother. **And the Lord heard it;** He took note of the complaint, for it was His intention to adjust matters with all possible speed. V. 3. (**Now the man Moses was very meek,** willing to subordinate himself to others, fully satisfied with a position of less importance, **above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.**) He was ever ready to endure in silence and to commit his justification to the Lord. This note is not a specimen of self-glorification, but a simple statement of fact, and thereby a defense of himself, for he swallowed the insult in silence. Not so, however, the Lord, whose honor and authority was at stake. V. 4. **And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses and unto Aaron and unto Miriam, Come out, ye three, unto the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** He wanted to set an example at once. **And they three came out.** V. 5. **And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud,** which here again sank down from its position above the Tabernacle, **and stood in the door of the Tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth,** the cloud separating them from Moses. Moses was thus on the inside, at the very door of the Holy Place, while Miriam and Aaron stood out in the court, probably on the east side of the altar of burnt offering. V. 6. **And He said, Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you,** any ordinary person endued with prophetic gifts in some form, as was the case with Miriam, **I, the Lord, will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.** Those were the forms of communication which the Lord used with ordinary prophets. V. 7. **My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house,** having approved himself in his entire service, in all the worship connected with the Tabernacle as the Sanctuary of Jehovah in the midst of His people. To him God had entrusted His house, His people, to him He had given the leadership of the children of Israel. V. 8. **With him will I speak mouth to mouth,** and not merely in obscure visions, **even apparently,** so that Moses could see God in some clear manifestation, **and not in dark speeches; and the similitude,** the form, **of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore, then, were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?** Reverential awe of God, whose minister and representative Moses was, should have kept Miriam and Aaron from uttering a single word against his authority. V. 9. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and He departed.** Having called them to account, having rebuked them for their presumption, the Lord removed His presence from them, preparatory to inflicting some form of punishment upon them. The entire worship was thus interrupted, the entire machinery of the cultus came to a standstill. God Himself is the Judge between His servants and those that dare to oppose their own notions to the precepts of the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to challenge the authority of such as have the Word of the Lord on their side.

MIRIAM'S LEPROSY BREAKS OUT AND IS HEALED. — V. 10. **And the cloud departed from off the Tabernacle,** it mounted aloft, in token of the fact that the relations between God and His people were severed; **and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow;** instead of being acknowledged by God as a leader of the people by the side of Moses, she was cursed with the plague, which would exclude her from the midst of the congregation as an unclean person, an outcast; **and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous;** her whole body was seized with the terrible sickness in a moment of time. V. 11. **And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee,** this form of humble address showing that he had learned his lesson and was ready to acknowledge the authority of Moses without question, **lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly,** literally, "wherewith we have played the fool," acted without decent consideration, **and wherein we have sinned.** V. 12. **Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb,** a still-born child, half rotted. The loathsome picture gives some idea of the condition in which Miriam found herself in consequence of her folly. V. 13. **And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee.** Far from retaining a grudge and carrying any resentment to the point where he would have refused an intercession, Moses at once pleads with the Lord to heal the repentant sinner. V. 14. **And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.** To this humiliation Miriam had to submit, like any ordinary leper at the time of his cleansing, Lev. 14. V. 15. **And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days,** pronounced clean indeed by Jehovah Himself, but bound to observe the full ceremony of cleansing, with the prescribed sacrifice; **and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.** V. 16. **And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the Wilderness of Paran,** on the south border of Canaan. As Miriam was healed from her external leprosy, when she proved her change of heart, so the Lord will heal us from the leprosy of sin, if we but confess our trespasses freely. He is the Lord that heals us.

CHAPTER 13.

The Twelve Spies.

THE SENDING OF THE SPIES. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan,** explore and inspect it from every angle, **which I give unto the children of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.** The men were not to be identical with the princes of the tribes, as named chap. 1, 5—16, but they were, nevertheless, to be notable for ability and leadership. V. 3. **And Moses, by the commandment of the Lord, sent them from the Wilderness of Paran;** for their camp at that time was on the southern border of the Land of Promise. **All those men were heads of the children of Israel,** chosen from the officers of the tribes, since they seemed especially endowed for the work of this mission. V. 4. **And these were their names: Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua, the son of Zaccur.** V. 5. **Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat, the son of Hori.** V. 6. **Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.** V. 7. **Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal, the son of Joseph.** V. 8. **Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea, the son of Nun.** V. 9. **Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti, the son of Raphu.** V. 10. **Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel, the son of Sodi.** V. 11. **Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi, the son of Susi.** V. 12. **Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel, the son of Gemalli.** V. 13. **Of the tribe of Asher, Sethus, the son of Michael.** V. 14. **Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi, the son of Vophsi.** V. 15. **Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel, the son of Machi.** V. 16. **These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea, the son of Nun, Jehoshua,** the change being from the simple word "help" to the more complete and comforting "help of Jehovah," "he whose help is Jehovah." This fact is recorded in this connection, since the incidents here narrated were of such vital importance in the life of the future leader of Israel; but the actual change of name probably took place long before this. V. 17. **And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan,** to get all the information possible regarding the land, the products, the cities, the industries, the inhabitants, and whatever other matters they might find interesting, **and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain;** they were to begin their work in the southern district of Canaan, which represented the stage of transition from the state of wilderness to that of a highly cultivated country, and were then to make their way northward into the more mountainous districts; v. 18. **and see the land, what it is,** in what condition as to soil and cultivation it was; **and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong,** valiant and courageous, **or weak,** timid and faint-hearted, **few or many;** v. 19. **and what the land is that they dwell in,** also in regard to climate, **whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds,** in open camps or in permanent, fortified towns and cities; v. 20. **and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean,** namely, so far as fertility of the soil was concerned, **whether there be wood therein, or not;** for the forests of a land are a very important item in its material prosperity. **And be ye of good courage,** they should attend to the work entrusted to them with all brave diligence, **and bring of the fruit of the land,** as a sample of its productivity. **Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes,** late summer or the beginning of autumn. This charge of Moses was intended to give them the valiant, undaunted hearts which they needed for the discharge of their difficult mission.

THE EXPLORATION OF THE SPIES AND THEIR REPORT. — V. 21. **So they went up and searched the land from the Wilderness of Zin,** as the northern end of the Wilderness of Paran was called, **unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath,** in the extreme northern part of Canaan, not far from Laish, which was later known as Dan. After this general statement a more detailed account is given. V. 22. **And they ascended by the south,** after leaving the camp of the Israelites, **and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)** These three princes of the Anakim were descendants of Arbah, the founder of Hebron, for its original name was Kiriath-arbah. This was a very old city, as Moses indicates by comparing its age with that of Zoan in Egypt, which the children of Israel knew so well. V. 23. **And they came unto the brook,** or valley, **of Eshcol,** north of Hebron, **and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes** (this was undoubtedly an incident of their return trip), **and they bare it between two upon a staff,** for its great weight made this necessary; **and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs,** for the valley was known, even at a later period, for the extraordinary richness and excellence of its fruits. V. 24. **The place was called the brook,** or valley, **Eshcol** (grape-cluster), **because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.** V. 25. **And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.** V. 26. **And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron,** to whom they officially reported their return, **and to all the congregation of the children of Israel,** who as-

sembled when the news of their return was spread, **unto the Wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh,** where the encampment of the Israelites was, **and brought back word unto them and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.** They were the returned heroes, and the people very likely surged about them and plied them with questions, a process which is apt to destroy the balance even of men with humble tendencies. V. 27. **And they told him,** Moses, in their official report, **and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us,** a clever phrase by which the responsibility is placed upon Moses, **and surely it floweth with milk and honey,** Ex. 3, 8; **and this is the fruit of it,** they had visible evidence of the extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil of Canaan. V. 28. **Nevertheless,** and here the glowing report is rapidly tempered by the element of personal feelings which the majority of the spies introduced, **the people be strong that dwell in the land,** both in numbers and in courage, not to speak of physical strength, **and the cities are walled and very great,** mighty, fortified, and inaccessible; **and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there,** people known for their great power. V. 29. **The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south; and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan.** Cp. Gen. 36, 12; 10, 15. 16; 13, 7. No sooner, however, had this majority report been made than a very emphatic minority report was presented. V. 30. **And Caleb stilled the people before Moses,** for the form and the tendency of the spies' report naturally produced great excitement, **and said, Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.** Thus Caleb voiced the opinion of himself and Joshua. V. 31. **But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.** Their cowardly hearts measured outward numbers only, seeing nothing but obstacles on every hand, forgetting entirely the almighty power of the Lord and His gracious promises. V. 32. **And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof,** its position and its fertility made it so desirable as a possession that the inhabitants, in endless feuds, were grinding one another to pieces; **and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature,** men whose great size reminded them of the dreadful giants that lived before the Flood, Gen. 6, 4. V. 33. **And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.** Thus the exaggerations of the cowards rose to a climax in this last extravagant statement, their purpose being to fill the hearts of all the people with the same senseless fear which possessed their own hearts. "Truly an expressive type of the lying fear with which worldly-mindedness has ever depicted the difficult approaches to the kingdom of God." Matters have reached an unfortunate stage in the Church when the men who are called to be the leaders of the congregations lose courage and dread the battle with the powers of darkness. But God always has some witnesses and servants that encourage His people and promise certain victory by the help of the Lord.

CHAPTER 14.

The Insurrection of the People and Its Consequences.

Joshua and Caleb Endeavor to Quench the Dissatisfaction. — V. 1. **And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept that night;** they moaned and shrieked and shed bitter tears and behaved altogether like men and women whose last hope in life is dead. And the galling grief of despondency was followed by an embittered feeling against the leaders of the host. V. 2. **And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron,** with a threatening note; **and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness!** Their lament was: If only we had died before starting out on this fool journey, or if we at least had died before matters had reached this stage! V. 3. **And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to the borders of this so-called Land of Promise, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey,** be taken captive and thus be at the mercy of their victorious enemies? **Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?** V. 4. **And they said one to another, Let us make a captain,** choose some determined man as leader, **and let us return into Egypt.** So the cowardly dissatisfaction of the people was rapidly turning into open rebellion. V. 5. **Then Moses and Aaron,** after endeavoring in vain to give the people the proper courage, by reminding them of the promises of Jehovah, Deut. 1, 29—31, **fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.** Their object was to bring the situation to the attention of the Lord and to im-

plore Him to interfere. V. 6. **And Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land,** Caleb having registered his protest even the day before, chap. 13, 30, **rent their clothes,** in the excess of their grief over the stubbornness of the people; v. 7. **and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.** They emphasized the exceptional merits of the land very strongly. V. 8. **If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey.** They had so many evidences of God's grace and mercy in the fulfilment of His promises to them that even an implied doubt of His inability to help them in overcoming the enemies was an insult to His majesty. V. 9. **Only rebel not ye against the Lord,** by such open disobedience, **neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us,** they can be devoured, overcome with ease; **their defense is departed from them,** literally, "their shadow, in which they were safe, has left them," **and the Lord is with us; fear them not.** In the Orient the shadow, which protects against the excessive heat of the sun, is a type of protection and refuge, Is. 30, 2. The Canaanites had filled up the measure of their sins, and the Lord had now fully determined to exterminate them, Ex. 34, 24; Lev. 18, 25; 20, 23. V. 10. **But all the congregation bade stone them with stones,** for the people were beyond the point where a sensible appeal could make any impression upon them; they were filled with stubborn spite. **And the glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle of the Congregation before all the children of Israel.** It was a mysterious manifestation by which the Lord indicated that He was about to render judgment in this matter. We have here a picture of the manner in which the unbelievers reject the proofs of God's goodness and mercy and repudiate the warnings and admonitions of God's faithful witnesses. But God will not be mocked; from time to time His judgments come upon the world with impressive exhibitions of His majesty.

MOSES INTERCEDES FOR THE PEOPLE. — V. 11. **And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me?** as they were now doing with their insulting rejection, **and how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?** They rejected God, they did not accept the evidences of His power and of His mercy; and His patience was at the point of being exhausted. V. 12. **I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them,** cut them off from the promised inheritance by exterminating them, **and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.** Cp. Ex. 32, 10. But Moses stepped into the breach as the mediator and the champion of the people. V. 13. **And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them,)** v. 14. **and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land.** The Egyptians themselves had received unmistakable evidence of the fact that it was the one true, the almighty God, who had led His people forth from their country, from the house of bondage, and they had brought the report to the Canaanitish nations. **For they,** all the nations here concerned, **have heard that Thou, Lord, art among this people,** being in their very midst, **that Thou, Lord, art seen face to face,** appearing here in a visible manifestation, **and that Thy cloud standeth over them, and that Thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.** The report concerning all these wonderful happenings had been carried into the entire surrounding country. V. 15. **Now if Thou shalt kill all this people as one man,** as the Lord had just threatened to do, **then the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak,** saying, v. 16. **Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness.** Cp. Ex. 32, 11—13; 34, 6. 7. The intercession of Moses urged that the honor of the Lord would suffer if He carried out His threat, for the heathen nations would not accept the true reason, alleging instead that the God of Israel was, after all, unable to fulfil His promises. Having urged this one point, Moses immediately added a second motive why the Lord should execute mercy rather than justice. V. 17. **And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great,** He should reveal and prove Himself as great in mercy, **according as Thou hast spoken,** saying, v. 18. **The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.** Cp. Ex. 34, 6. 7. That is the manner of effective prayer: it takes hold of the Word and promises of the Lord and urges His truth and mercy until He must confess Himself overcome. V. 19. **Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.** It is the prayer of faith which does not allege merit and worthiness, but pleads only for mercy, for forgiveness, for pardon. **V. 20. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word;** He had been vanquished by the appeal of Moses, by the two great reasons urged by this bold champion of the people. V. 21. **But as truly as I live,** a most solemn oath by His own life, **all the earth shall be filled**

with the glory of the Lord, as a result of the measures which the Lord intended to take in punishing the people for their sins. He did not purpose to destroy Israel as a people, according to His first threat, but He did intend to punish the transgressors, the insurrectionists. V. 22. **Because all those men which have seen My glory and My miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice,** v. 23. **surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it;** in bringing His judgment to pass upon this generation, the Lord would contribute to the spreading of His glory through all the earth; v. 24. **but My servant Caleb, because he hath another spirit with him,** not one of disobedience and rebellion, **and hath followed Me fully,** trusted absolutely in the merciful guidance of Jehovah, **him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.** V. 25. **(Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.)** The part of Canaan over which Caleb would have dominion extended from the region of the Amalekites down to the lowlands where the Canaanites lived. **Tomorrow turn you and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea;** they were to turn their faces back to the desert and its desolation, until the punishment of the Lord would have gone into effect. In the same way the unbelievers that scorn the promises of God concerning the inheritance of the saints in light will find themselves excluded for all eternity from the blessings which they would not accept.

THE JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED. — V. 26. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,** saying, v. 27. **How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against Me?** being incorrigible in their dissatisfied opposition to the ways of the Lord's dispensation. **I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against Me,** for they were continually engaged in grumbling of this kind. V. 28. **Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you,** cp. v. 2: v. 29. **your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness;** literally, "in this very wilderness shall fall your dead bodies"; **and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me,** v. 30. **doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I sware,** by a solemn lifting up of the hand, **to make you dwell therein, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun.** They would see for themselves whether the oath which the Lord had now sworn by His own life would be fulfilled; they would find out whether a single one of the dissatisfied murmurers would reach the Land of Promise. V. 31. **But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey,** v. 3. **them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.** V. 32. **But as for you,** as the Lord here repeats for the sake of emphasis, **your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.** V. 33. **And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years,** sustaining themselves as nomads with their herds in the wastes of the Sinaitic Peninsula, **and bear your whoredoms,** to expiate, in a way, the spiritual unfaithfulness of their fathers, **until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness,** until the desert had consumed even the last of them. V. 34. **After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days,** chap. 13, 25, **each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise;** they would experience what it means when the Lord turns from a people in anger, being obliged to withdraw or to change His original promise. V. 35. **I, the Lord, have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation that are gathered together against Me; in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.** V. 36. **And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land,** by misrepresenting the facts about Canaan and exaggerating the difficulties of conquering its people, v. 37. **even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord;** the punishment struck them very suddenly, and struck them down as the first among the rebellious people. V. 38. **But Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still,** their preservation, in the circumstances, being all the more remarkable, and substantiating the word of the Lord. The judgment upon such as were leaders in the Church and abused the trust placed in them by leading their people astray, will be especially harsh.

THE DISOBEDIENCE OF THE PEOPLE PUNISHED. V. 39. **And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel,** he announced to them in what manner the Lord intended to punish them; **and the people mourned greatly.** Although they were now standing on the threshold of Canaan, they were denied entrance into the Land of Promise, and all by their own fault. But the measure of their trespass was not yet full, for their repentance now turned them to presumption, since it was not connected with true humility. V. 40. **And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain,** with

the object of forcing their way through the pass to the opposite side of the mountain range and beginning the conquest of Canaan on their own responsibility; it was a reaction from the extremities of despair which plunged the people into foolhardiness, **saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned.** That simple statement was to undo the happenings of the past two days. V. 41. **And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? But it shall not prosper.** He predicted certain defeat to the self-willed people, who presumed to set aside the word of the Lord. True repentance bows in humility under the will of the Lord, no matter in what manner He chooses to make it known. V. 42. **Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.** V. 43. **For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you,** their armies having probably been mobilized to resist the threatened invasion, **and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.** Two days before, in unbelief, they had refused to take up arms against the inhabitants of Canaan, and now again, in unbelief, because they refused to accept the word of Moses concerning the seriousness of God's judgment, they intend to undertake the conquest; to the old sin of unbelieving despair came the new sin of presumptuous self-confidence. V. 44. **But they presumed to go up unto the hilltop; nevertheless the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp.** V. 45. **Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill,** eager to meet the invaders, **and smote them and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.** Having put them to flight, they pursued them with relentless fury, Deut. 1, 44, attacking the individual bands again and again, until parts of the Israelitish army were scattered far into the land of the Edomites. The behavior of the Israelites is a picture of the despair and the deceit of man's natural heart, which insists upon going its own ways. But God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble. This is true both in spiritual and in temporal matters.

CHAPTER 15.

Regulations Regarding Sacrifices. The Sabbath-Breaker.

ORDINANCES CONCERNING VARIOUS OFFERINGS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations which I give unto you,** when they would live under normal conditions, to which they were all looking forward, v. 3. **and will make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow,** whereby the gift was separated from the rest of the worshiper's goods, **or in a free-will offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savor unto the Lord, of the herd, or of the flock,** v. 4. **then shall he that offereth his offering unto the Lord bring a meat-offering of a tenth deal of flour** (about two and one-half quarts) **mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil** (about one quart). This was the regular meal- or meat-offering which was intended to accompany the bloody sacrifices. Cp. Lev. 2. V. 5. **And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice for one lamb,** the libation varying with the value of the victims. V. 6. **Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat-offering two-tenth deals of flour** (a little more than five quarts) **mingled with the third part of an hin of oil** (about one-third of a gallon). V. 7. **And for a drink-offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine for a sweet savor unto the Lord.** V. 8. **And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace-offerings unto the Lord,** v. 9. **then shall he** (the worshiper) **bring with a bullock a meat-offering of three-tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil.** V. 10. **And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.** And not only was the quantity of the meal and the drink-offering increased according to the value of the victims, but also according to the number of victims brought at one time, in one sacrifice. V. 11. **Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid.** V. 12. **According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number.** This law, moreover, as most of those concerning worship, applied to strangers that were received into the congregation of the Lord as well as to the native Israelites. V. 13. **All that are born of the country,** the native Jews, **shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.** V. 14. **And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations,** having been accepted into the Jewish Church in the customary manner, **and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord, as ye do, so he shall do.** V. 15. **One ordinance shall be**

both for you of the congregation, members of the Jewish Church by birth, **and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations; as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord.** V. 16. **One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.** Under New Testament conditions this holds true with double importance; we ought to reach the point without further parley or delay when we accord to those who join us in more mature years the same cordial welcome which we give to our children, who enter into communicant membership almost automatically, by confirmation. There is a fine hint here for mission-work. V. 17. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** saying, v. 18. **Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you,** this being not a remote possibility, but a definite certainty, v. 19. **then it shall be that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave-offering unto the Lord,** a part of the blessing lifted off and presented to the Lord. V. 20. **Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough,** of the first coarse meal that was ground from the grain, **for an heave-offering; as ye do the heave-offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye heave it,** the reference being to the firstlings of the harvest, which were consecrated to the Lord. Like all offerings of first-fruits this sacrificial cake was given to the priests. V. 21. **Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the Lord an heave-offering in your generations.** V. 22. **And if ye have erred and not observed all these commandments which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses,** v. 23. **even all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the Lord commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations,** for the sins of omission are just as bad as the sins of commission, Lev. 4, 13—21, v. 24. **then it shall be, if aught be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation,** because they were not aware of certain precepts and regulations, **that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor unto the Lord, with his meat-offering, and his drink-offering,** according to the manner, as it was prescribed by the ordinance, **and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering,** the offering of the rulers thus being included with that of the people as a whole, Lev. 4, 23. V. 25. **And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them,** their relationship to God would be restored through the sacrifice; **for it is ignorance, and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord, and their sin-offering before the Lord, for their ignorance;** v. 26. **and it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them, seeing all the people were in ignorance.** The Lord permitted a distinction to be made, but the sin of ignorance brought guilt upon the people just the same. V. 27. **And if any soul,** one of the ordinary members of the congregation, **sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering,** Lev. 4, 27. 28. V. 28. **And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.** Lev. 4, 35. V. 29. **Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.** V. 30. **But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously,** in a high-handed manner, in spite of better knowledge, with deliberate wickedness, **whether he be born in the land or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord,** for every deliberate, wilful wickedness is blasphemy in the face of the Lord; **and that soul shall be cut off from among his people,** he was to suffer the death penalty. V. 31. **Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.** Translated into terms of the New Testament, this rule reminds us of the fact that the open, rebellious, unrepentant sinner, in whose case all brotherly admonitions have no effect, must be excluded from the Christian congregation by the act known as excommunication.

THE SABBATH-BREAKER STONED.—V. 32. **And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath-day.** The incident, the exact time of which is not given, took place some time during the long years of the wilderness journey, and is here inserted as an example of a presumptuous sin. V. 33. **And they that found him gathering sticks,** that caught him in the act of openly transgressing the Law of God, **brought him unto Moses and Aaron and unto all the congregation.** The matter was brought to the official knowledge of the entire assembly, for all the people would be involved in the guilt unless steps were taken to remove it. V. 34. **And they put him in ward,** not as a punishment, but to prevent his escape, **because it was not declared what should be done to him,** the judges in charge of his case were not altogether clear under the present circumstances whether the offender was to receive capital punishment. V. 35. **And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp,** the execution taking place

outside, in order not to defile the camp. V. 36. **And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died, as the Lord commanded Moses.** So the guilt was removed from the congregation, and the offender received his just reward. The members of Christian congregations should never forget that they will become partakers of other men's sins if they permit evil-doing to go on in their midst and do not take the steps prescribed by God for the removal of the malicious sinner by excommunication.

THE FRINGES OF THE GARMENTS. — V. 37. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 38. **Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments,** blossomlike ornaments of twisted cords or tassels, in the four corners of the upper garment, which was used as a throw, or mantle, Deut. 22, 12, **throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue,** fasten the tassels to the edge of the garment with a hyacinth-colored thread; v. 39. **and it shall be unto you for a fringe,** a tassel, **that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them, and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a-whoring;** they should not act according to the ideas suggested by the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, for the result would surely be spiritual unfaithfulness; v. 40. **that ye may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God.** These tassels, which our Lord Jesus also wore in obedience to the Law, Matt. 9, 20; Luke 8, 44, and which were to remind the wearer of all the provisions of God's holy will, were made exceptionally large and conspicuous by the Pharisees, for they wanted to make the impression of unusual holiness, Matt. 23, 5. V. 41. **I am the Lord, your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord, your God.** While the garments of the priests had a special symbolical meaning, yet these distinctive ornaments on the dress of all the Israelites served to remind them of the special relationship which existed between them and the Lord. This fellowship between the believers and the Lord is still more intimate in the New Testament, and they ought to keep this fact in mind at all times, even without special reminders.

CHAPTER 16.

The Rebellion of Korah.

THE CHALLENGE OF KORAH AND HIS COMPANIONS. — V. 1. **Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi,** himself a member of the band of Levites whom the Lord had distinguished by entrusting to them the special service of the Sanctuary, chap. 7, 9, **and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab,** of the tribe of Reuben, chap. 26, 8, **and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men,** organized a rebellion under the very eyes of Moses; v. 2. **and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel,** for the conspiracy that had first brooded in secret now came out in open revolt, **two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown,** all of them leaders and influential men in their own tribes; v. 3. **and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron,** in a formal organization, with the intention of ousting the leaders instituted by God, **and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you,** you have had the leadership long enough, seeing **all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?** Their argument was that, since the entire nation had been called to be the holy people of Jehovah, Ex. 19, 5. 6, therefore they all had an equal right to the priesthood and to the leadership, and any member might claim its rights and execute its duties. The rebels entirely overlooked the fact that God was responsible for the present arrangement, and that He had made the obedience of the children of Israel to the terms of the covenant His condition when He called them to be His people. V. 4. **And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face,** in the attitude of a suppliant bringing his case to the attention of the Lord; v. 5. **and he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the Lord will show who are His and who is holy,** the reference being to the priestly office, for which Aaron had been consecrated by the special command of the Lord; **and will cause him to come near unto Him, even him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto Him.** God Himself would indicate whom He had selected to offer the sacrifices before Him in the Sanctuary. Moses was willing to submit the entire matter to a test. V. 6. **This do: Take you censers, Korah and all his company,** such vessels as were used for offering incense in the Holy Place, at the altar of incense, v. 7. **and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow; and it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy,** and therefore be accepted as the Lord's priest. **Ye take too much upon**

you, ye sons of Levi. That ought to be sufficient for them; that surely would be a fair test. V. 8. **And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi,** he addresses them all by that name, because their leaders were Kohathites: v. 9. **Seemeth it but a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?** Surely these privileges, as here enumerated, should have been sufficient to satisfy the ambition of even the most ardent defender of the practical priesthood of all Israelites. V. 10. **And He hath brought thee** (the tribe of Levi) **near to Him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also?** The Levites even now held a higher position in the congregation than the other tribes, and their desire to have all Israelites recognized as priests was nothing but sham and pretense, their real aim being the office of the priesthood for themselves. V. 11. **For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord,** for that is what their rebellion amounted to. **And what is Aaron that ye murmur against him?** It was not a case of Aaron's having placed himself into the office of high priest by deceitful or arbitrary measures; and so the murmuring of the rebels, ostensibly directed against Aaron, was in reality a rebellion against Jehovah. In the same manner to-day false teachers arise in the Church and try to push out those that have the rightful call of the Lord. There is always danger that such methods will be supported by dissatisfied spirits.

THE TEST. — V. 12. **And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab,** the negotiations till now having been carried on with Korah and his company; **which said, We will not come up;** they refused to come out to the open space before the Tabernacle. V. 13. **Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey,** for so they now designated Egypt, **to kill us in the wilderness,** for they accused Moses of deliberately exposing them to a slow death in the desert, **except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?** That, they insisted, was the object of Moses, to play the lord, the tyrant over them, to make them do his bidding while he lived a life of ease. V. 14. **Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey,** whereby they sneeringly imply that he had not kept his promises, Ex. 4, 30; 3, 7—10, **or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up.** So they flung the charge into the face of Moses that he was boring out the eyes of the people, that is, degrading them to absolute, blind obedience to his wishes and whims, against all individual judgment. V. 15. **And Moses was very wroth,** the insulting injustice of the charge provoking him to a just indignation, **and said unto the Lord, Respect not Thou their offering;** God should not accept their sacrifice, which certainly was a mild form of vindication of his own uprightness; **I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.** The charge that Moses had used tyrannical measures at any time was absolutely unfounded. V. 16. **And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou and they and Aaron, to-morrow;** v. 17. **and take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also and Aaron, each of you his censer,** all of them performing one of the chief acts characteristic of the priesthood. V. 18. **And they took every man his censer,** they accepted the challenge in a spirit of blasphemous presumption, **and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation with Moses and Aaron.** They actually had the audacity to press forward to the place which was reserved for the ministrations of the priests. V. 19. **And Korah gathered all the congregation against them,** in an attitude of hostility, **unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation;** he encouraged them to press forward to profane the Sanctuary. **And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation;** by some miraculous manifestation the Lord gave a display of His majesty preparatory to punishing the offenders. V. 20. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,** v. 21. **Separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment.** Because the people had taken sides with the rebels, the Lord intended to exterminate the entire congregation in one moment. V. 22. **And they fell upon their faces,** in the attitude of most fervent intercession, **and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh,** Creator and Preserver of all living things, **shall one man** (Korah) **sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?** Korah was the leading spirit, he had instigated the rebellion; the rest were guilty indeed, but only inasmuch as they had given heed to his seditious speeches. Apparently the Lord heard the prayer of His servants, for He did not proceed to exterminate all the people. The confident prayer of the believers is a mighty weapon before God.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE REBELLIOUS FACTION. — V. 23. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 24. **Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle,** the place of habitation, **of Korah,**

Dathan, and Abiram. V. 25. **And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram,** who, it seems, had stayed in their tents, as they had said, v. 12, while Korah led the revolt against the Tabernacle; **and the elders of Israel followed him.** V. 26. **And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins,** be punished as partakers in their transgression. V. 27. **So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side,** moved back in a wide circle from their place of habitation. **And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children,** apparently defying the authority of Moses and Aaron to the very last. V. 28. **And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works,** everything connected with the leadership of the people; **for I have not done them of mine own mind;** he was not governed by any selfish motives. V. 29. **If these men die the common death of all men,** as men usually die, **or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me.** If Providence would keep the rebellious people from a violent death, then Moses was ready to be accused of being an impostor. V. 30. **But if the Lord make a new thing,** something unheard of until now, **and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick,** while still alive, **into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.** V. 31. **And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them;** v. 32. **and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up and their houses,** the families of the leaders, **and all the men that appertained unto Korah,** that is, his servants, **and all their goods.** The catastrophe included Korah, although he was probably not in his tent at the time, but somewhere between the Tabernacle and the section of the camp south of the Tabernacle, and next to the camp of the Kohathites, where the tribe of Reuben was encamped. V. 33. **They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation.** It should be noted that the sons of Korah were not included in this punishment, chap. 26, 11. Their descendants were later known as the sons of Korah, a noted family of singers, 1 Chron. 6, 18—22; 9, 19. V. 34. **And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them,** for the noise, as the abyss opened beneath them, was mingled with the shrieks of the doomed; **for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.** It was not a case of wholesome fear, however, which would have led them to repentance, but of slavish dread, which cowed without conquering them. V. 35. **And there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense,** and thus, like Nadab and Abihu, offered strange fire before the Lord, Lev. 10, 2. V. 36. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 37. **Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning,** out of the midst of those that had been destroyed by the fire of the Lord, **and scatter thou the fire yonder,** that is, the coals of fire that were in the censers; **for they are hallowed,** consecrated by virtue of the fact that they had been presented before Jehovah. V. 38. **The censers of these sinners against their own souls,** who by their sin had forfeited their lives, **let them** (the artisans) **make them broad plates for a covering of the altar; for they offered them before the Lord,** although without authority, **therefore they are hallowed; and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel,** lest some one else encroach upon the functions of the priesthood in the same manner and perish for his foolhardiness. V. 39. **And Eleazar, the priest, took the brazen censers, wherewith they that were burned had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar,** v. 40. **to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron,** even an Israelite who does not belong to the family of priests, **come near to offer incense before the Lord; that he be not as Korah and as his company; as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses.** Christians will also be careful to remember that God is opposed to the haughty spirits who occasionally rise and wish to set aside the regular office of the ministry.

THE REBELLION AND THE PUNISHMENT OF THE CONGREGATION. — V. 41. **But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.** They charged these two with the responsibility for the death of the rebels, whom they, in blasphemous exaggeration, call the people of the Lord, the flower of the Lord's army. To that extent the wickedness of the hardened heart will go in refusing to acknowledge its own sinfulness; for the truth of the matter was that Moses had saved the people from sudden destruction the day before. V. 42. **And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron,** a sullen mob, ready for almost any crime, **that they looked toward the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared,** in a threatening manifestation of His majesty over against the

people, while it sheltered, at the same time, the men against whom the murmuring of the mob was directed. V. 43. **And Moses and Aaron came before the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** ready to receive the commands of the Lord. V. 44. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 45. **Get you up from among this congregation,** remove from its midst as quickly as possible, **that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces,** with the intention of making a plea, even now, for the lives of the people. The attitude of the Lord, however, showed Moses that it was too late for an intercession. V. 46. **And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar of burnt offering, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun,** a terrible, devastating pestilence, which struck dead without warning. V. 47. **And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people,** the incense being a symbol of intercession and of the people's prayers of repentance. V. 48. **And he stood,** placed himself like a valiant champion, **between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed,** shut off, confined to the place where it had broken out. V. 49. **Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.** V. 50. **And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** where the faithful leader watched, although rejected by his own people; **and the plague was stayed,** it did no further damage, wrought no more ravages. Note: The two hundred and fifty censers of the fanatics effected nothing but deadly consequences; the one censer of the true high priest saves life and conquers death by making a separation between the living and the dead. Mark, also: Aaron is here again a type of Christ, the perfect Priest, who entered into the midst of lost and condemned mankind and by His sacrifice stayed the plague of God's wrath, thus making a perfect atonement for the world.

CHAPTER 17.

Further Confirmation of Aaron's Priesthood.

THE COMMAND CONCERNING THE RODS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods; write thou every man's name upon his rod.** This was in accordance with the rule that the oldest son of a father's house, that is, of a patriarchate, within a tribe was considered a prince. For the member of each tribe that held this position one rod was to be chosen. These rods were small branches or twigs of trees that grew in the neighborhood, probably all, like that of Aaron, such as were taken from almond-trees. V. 3. **And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi,** for according to the rule Aaron was the prince of the tribe of Levi; **for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.** Since the tribe of Levi is here mentioned for the purposes of God's object, the chances are that Ephraim and Manasseh were in this case considered as one tribe, the tribe of Joseph. V. 4. **And thou shalt lay them,** the rods, **up in the Tabernacle of the Congregation before the testimony,** in the Most Holy Place, before the Ark of the Covenant, **where I will meet with you.** V. 5. **And it shall come to pass that the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom,** the Lord's aim being to counteract any further murmuring of the people against the priesthood of Aaron by this miracle; **and I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel whereby they murmur against you.** To increase the effect of the miracle Moses was carefully to guard against fraud by writing the name of each prince on the rod which represented his tribe.

THE MIRACULOUS BUDDING OF AARON'S ROD. V. 6. **And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.** All this was thus done in the view of all the princes to preclude all possibility of fraud and to make the test fair in every respect. V. 7. **And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the Tabernacle of Witness,** this name of the Sanctuary being singularly appropriate here, for God intended to bear witness to His servant. V. 8. **And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the Tabernacle of Witness;** for he, as God's representative, had charge of the test; **and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.** In one night, therefore, had been brought about what ordinarily takes weeks and months, for the buds developed into shoots, brought forth blossoms, and developed into the mature fruit. V. 9. **And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel,** for

they were to be convinced by personal inspection; **and they looked, and took every man his rod.** Here was an overwhelming proof of God's direct interposition, and the Lord, in the most unmistakable manner, designated Aaron as His servant in the office of the high priest. The priesthood of Aaron was to remain in power until the coming of the true and eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ. V. 10. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels,** against the children of rebellion, against any persons that were filled with dissatisfied notions and with false ambitions over against the chosen priest of the Lord; **and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me that they die not.** Even in this instance the Lord had the welfare of His people in mind, in guarding against their own foolishness. V. 11. **And Moses did so; as the Lord commanded him, so did he.** The rod of Aaron with which the Lord had performed a miracle was kept in the Ark of the Covenant, Heb. 9, 4. V. 12. **And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.** This new miracle had filled them with such awe that they were filled with the terror of death. V. 13. **Whosoever cometh anything** (in any way) **near unto the Tabernacle of the Lord shall die,** as the result of Korah's rebellion had plainly shown; **shall we be consumed with dying?** In their present state of mind they felt that there was no grace and mercy with the Lord any more. This excessive fear of death, although not a fruit of faith, still served to keep the people in submission to the will of the Lord. The rod of Aaron which budded is a type of the eternal priesthood of Christ, who is able to save those that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them, Heb. 7, 24. 25.

CHAPTER 18.

Concerning the Maintenance of Priests and Levites.

THE OFFICE OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES. — V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Aaron,** for the fact of his priesthood was now practically unchallenged among the children of Israel, **Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee,** the entire family in all its descendants, **shall bear the iniquity of the Sanctuary,** they were to consider themselves responsible for the removal of any defilement which might come upon the Tabernacle and its equipment while it was being used for purposes of worship; **and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood,** whatever impurities and imperfections still clung to them in the work of their calling. It was for the removal of these sins as they resulted from the natural sinful condition of men that the annual atonement had been ordered by God, Lev. 16, 16 ff. V. 2. **And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee,** causing them to come near to the Sanctuary with him, for the purpose of ministering, **that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee,** in the position of assistants in the worship of Jehovah; **but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of Witness,** as being actually in charge of the sacrifices and of the various acts of atonement connected with the offerings. V. 3. **And they shall keep thy charge,** observe and do those things which they were directed to do by the priest, **and the charge of all the Tabernacle,** in the matter of transporting the Tabernacle and its appointments and performing such other offices as were connected therewith; **only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the Sanctuary,** those inside the Tabernacle, **and the altar,** of incense, **that neither they, nor ye also, die;** for every person that approached these without proper command and authority risked immediate death, as the people had now repeatedly seen. V. 4. **And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the Tabernacle of the Congregation for all the service of the Tabernacle; and a stranger,** a layman not belonging to the tribe of Levi, **shall not come nigh unto you.** Cp. chap. 1, 53; 3, 7. V. 5. **And ye shall keep the charge of the Sanctuary and the charge of the altar,** this special function was limited to the priests alone; **that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.** V. 6. **And I, behold, I have taken your brethren, the Levites, from among the children of Israel; to you they are given as a gift for the Lord to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** Cp. chap. 3, 9; 8, 16. 19. V. 7. **Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar,** all the service connected with the golden altar of incense, where the priests were daily employed, **and within the veil,** for the high priest entered into the Most Holy Place once every year, on the great Day of Atonement, Lev. 16, 2; **and ye shall serve. I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift,** out of free grace and mercy, to stimulate all the greater diligence; **and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death,** since this service was the exclusive duty of the family of Aaron. In a far better and higher sense it is true that we Christians have been given the rights of the universal priesthood of the New Testament by God's

free gift in Jesus Christ, whence it follows that we should appreciate this blessing all the more highly.

The Priests' Share of the Sacrifices. — V. 8. **And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave-offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel,** whatever they set aside for the Lord, either by the Law or in the form of a free-will offering; **unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing and to thy sons by an ordinance forever.** These were priestly revenues, chap. 5, 9. V. 9. **This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat-offering of theirs, and every sin-offering of theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs which they shall render unto Me shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons.** Falling to the lot of the priests out of the sacrificial fire, they were to be regarded as being strictly set apart from profane and common use. V. 10. **In the most holy place,** in the place reserved for that purpose in the court of the Tabernacle, Lev. 6, 9. 19; 7, 6, **shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it; it shall be holy unto thee.** The burnt offering is not included in this list, since only the hide of such sacrifices became the portion of the priests. V. 11. **And this is thine: the heave-offering of their gift,** all the offerings of the people that were made in this manner, **with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.** Lev. 22, 2—13. V. 12. **All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee.** Cp. Deut. 26, 2. 10; 8, 8; Lev. 19, 23. 24. V. 13. **And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the Lord,** chap. 15, 19; Ex. 22, 29; 23, 19; 34, 26; Lev. 2, 14, **shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it.** V. 14. **Everything devoted in Israel,** consecrated to God by a vow, **shall be thine,** Lev. 27, 28. V. 15. **Everything that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the Lord, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine,** Ex. 13, 2; 22, 29; Lev. 27, 26; **nevertheless the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstlings of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem,** Ex. 13, 13; 34, 20. V. 16. **And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.** Cp. chap. 3, 47; Lev. 27, 2 ff. V. 17. **But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat thou shalt not redeem; they are holy.** Being clean animals, they could be consecrated as sacrifices to the Lord. **Thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savor unto the Lord,** Lev. 3, 2. 5. V. 18. **And the flesh of them shall be thine; as the wave-breast and as the right shoulder,** the heave-shoulder, **are thine.** V. 19. **All the heave-offerings of the holy things which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee,** an indissoluble covenant, an inviolable agreement. Cp. Lev. 2, 13. In this manner the priesthood of Aaron and his family was once more firmly established in Israel, to serve the people in upholding the fellowship between them and Jehovah.

Of Tithes. — V. 20. **And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them,** Aaron in this case representing the entire priesthood, chap. 26, 62; Deut. 12, 12; 14, 27; Josh. 14, 3. **I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel;** to the covenant God they were to devote their services, and He would, in turn, provide for all their needs. V. 21. **And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance,** Lev. 27, 30—33, **for their service which they serve, even the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** The tithes of all the income among the children of Israel were the Temple revenue; out of these the Levites and priests received their salaries. V. 22. **Neither must the children of Israel,** those that did not belong to the tribe of Levi, **henceforth come nigh the Tabernacle of the Congregation, lest they bear sin and die,** since such unauthorized approach was an act of presumption which was punished in that manner. V. 23. **But the Levites shall do the service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity,** be responsible and make atonement for all the sins of which they would be guilty in connection with their service. **It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.** V. 24. **But the tithes of the children of Israel which they offer as an heave-offering unto the Lord I have given to the Levites to inherit; therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.** V. 25. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 26. **Thus speak unto the Levites and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance,** which was to be their regular income, upon which they

should be able to depend, **then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.** So the Levites also were obliged to set aside ten per cent. of their income for the Lord, this amount being given to the priests. V. 27. **And this your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor and as the fulness of the wine-press,** like grain or wine which they themselves had harvested. V. 28. **Thus ye also shall offer an heave-offering unto the Lord of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave-offering to Aaron, the priest,** for the tithe of their tithe was consecrated to the Lord. V. 29. **Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of the Lord, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.** V. 30. **Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, as the revenue due to the priests, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor and as the increase of the wine-press,** as though they had harvested this in fields belonging to them. V. 31. **And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households;** after paying their own tithes they were at liberty to do this; **for it is your reward for your service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** In this way the Levites were relieved of the cares and worries of every-day life, and could devote themselves exclusively to their ministry in observing the statutes of Jehovah. V. 32. **And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it,** of enjoying their income with their own families, **when ye have heaved from it the best of it,** if only this provision were observed; **neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel** by disregarding these ordinances, or by bringing the gifts of the Sanctuary into an unclean place, **lest ye die.** If so much depended upon the precepts of the types and the shadows of things to come, how much more does it behoove us Christians to observe the will of the Lord in all respects!

CHAPTER 19.

The Water of Separation.

THE PREPARATION OF THE WATER. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,** v. 2. **This is the ordinance of the Law,** the most important statute of instruction dealing with Levitical purification, **which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring thee a red heifer without spot,** of a solid color, **wherein is no blemish,** no disease or defect of any kind, **and upon which never came yoke,** all these points being traits of the freshest life, of the fulness of strength; v. 3. **and ye shall give her unto Eleazar, the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp,** since the entire rite was connected most closely with the defilement of death and could therefore not take place in the court of the Tabernacle, **and one shall slay her before his face;** v. 4. **and Eleazar, the priest,** as the presumptive successor of his father in the office of high priest, **shall take of her blood with his finger,** after it had been brought to the Sanctuary and kept from coagulating by constant stirring, **and sprinkle of her blood directly before the Tabernacle of the Congregation seven times.** By this rite the slain animal became a sacrifice, a sin-offering. In order to remind the congregation that death is the wages of sin, this antidote against the uncleanness of death was taken from a sin-offering. The life of the slain beast, sacrificed for the sin of the congregation, was thus delivered to the Lord, to signify that death itself was rendered powerless by the death of this most perfect blooming life. V. 5. **And one shall burn the heifer in his sight,** Eleazar, as before, being responsible for the proper execution of everything connected with the sacrifice: **her skin and her flesh and her blood with her dung shall he burn;** v. 6. **and the priest shall take cedar-wood,** which was a symbol of inexhaustible strength of life, **and hyssop,** to which were ascribed purifying properties, **and scarlet,** which typified the intensive power of life, **and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer,** in order to make the ashes represent everything that was full of the highest life and strength, the very essence of indestructive power. V. 7. **Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even,** as having handled, symbolically at least, the uncleanness of death. V. 8. **And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even,** for the same reason as the priest. V. 9. **And a man that is clean,** Levitically pure, **shall gather up the ashes of the heifer,** for they were now a most precious treasure, **and lay them up without the camp in a clean place,** store them up most carefully, **and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation,** to prepare a water intended to remove certain defilements. V. 10. **And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even, for he also became Levitically defiled by the performance of this task; and it shall be unto the children of Israel and unto the**

stranger that sojourneth among them for a statute forever; the special rites connected with the water of purification as prepared with the ashes were to be observed as long as the Levitical priesthood and its ordinances would endure. The Lord at all times wants pure and holy people as His servants.

The Use of the Water. — V. 11. **He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.** It made no difference what the age of the dead person was or what relationship existed, the one that touched the dead body was defiled. V. 12. **He shall purify himself with it,** the water of purification, **on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean; but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.** Neglect in complying with the rules simply lengthened the time needed for purification. V. 13. **Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead,** of any soul, no matter of what age and sex, **and purifieth not himself, defileth the Tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel;** a refusal to comply with the rules resulted in death to the offender; **because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.** Unless atonement was made, such a person forfeited his life. V. 14. **This is the law when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent and all that is in the tent shall be unclean seven days.** V. 15. **And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it,** tied firmly to it by means of a string or cord, to keep out the odor of decay, **is unclean.** V. 16. **And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields,** even for the purpose of burial, **or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.** It was for this reason that the Jewish elders were so strict about marking the graves, especially shortly before a large festival, lest some one inadvertently touch such a grave and be defiled. Cp. Matt. 23, 27. V. 17. **And for an unclean person,** one defiled in the manner just described, **they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto,** added to and mixed with the ashes, **in a vessel;** v. 18. **and a clean person shall take hyssop,** on account of the cleansing powers ascribed to it, **and dip it in the water,** as thus prepared, **and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone,** a skeleton, **or one slain, or one dead, or a grave;** v. 19. **and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he,** the defiled person, **shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.** V. 20. **And the man that shall be unclean and shall not purify himself,** deliberately and wilfully neglect the act of purification, **that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation,** as the Lord here repeats for the sake of emphasis, **because he hath defiled the Sanctuary of the Lord; the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.** V. 21. **And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even,** both having come in contact with the uncleanness of death in the rite of purification. V. 22. **And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it,** the water of purification, **shall be unclean until even.** These rites of external purification were symbols of the inner, spiritual cleansing which should be found in all true believers. "The ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" Heb. 9, 13. 14. The water of purification is also a type of the water of Baptism, for by having our souls sprinkled from an evil conscience, we have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. 10, 19. 22.

CHAPTER 20.

The Water of Strife. Death of Aaron.

The Murmuring of the People at Kadesh. V. 1. **Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the Desert of Zin,** on the northern border of the Wilderness of Paran, **in the first month** of the fortieth year of the wilderness journey, cp. v. 29 with chap. 33, 38; **and the people abode in Kadesh,** in or near the place where they had camped some thirty-eight years before, chap. 13, 26. The older generation had in the mean time died, being overthrown in the wilderness for their unbelief, 1 Cor. 10, 5. **And Miriam,** the prophetess, the sister of Moses and Aaron, and the most prominent among all the women of the host, **died there, and was buried there.** V. 2. **And there was no water for the congregation; and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron,** in a dissatisfied mob, just as their fathers had done before them. V. 3. **And the people chode with Moses and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren,** all those that had gradually

been taken away during the stay in the wilderness, **died before the Lord!** V. 4. **And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness that we and our cattle should die there?** It is the same unreasonable grumbling, the same exaggeration of unbelief which had characterized the actions of the people more than a generation before. V. 5. **And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt,** which the memory of their childhood now painted before their eyes in glowing colors, **to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed,** that is, where grain can grow, **or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.** They missed all the delights of field and orchard and vineyard, and the entire situation filled them with disgust. V. 6. **And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly,** where they had heard the bitter complaint, **unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and they fell upon their faces,** in helpless surrender and in pleading supplication. **And the glory of the Lord appeared unto them,** in majestic contrast to their abject perplexity. Christians should also keep in mind at all times that it is nothing but God's goodness and mercy which still takes care of them, in spite of all their dissatisfaction and their many faults.

WATER OUT OF THE ROCK. — V. 7. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 8. **Take the rod,** the same shepherd's staff which had already figured so largely in various miracles, Ex. 17, 5, **and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron, thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes,** in an address which was equivalent to a command and must yield results; **and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.** So the Lord chose to overlook the people's sin of grumbling and to treat them with a kindness which they did not deserve. V. 9. **And Moses took the rod from before the Lord,** for it had probably been deposited in the Sanctuary, as **He commanded him.** V. 10. **And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he,** Moses, **said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?** The thought seems to be implied: Your attitude is one of such perpetual nagging and grumbling that there is some doubt in my mind whether we really ought, and whether we shall be able, to provide you with water. V. 11. **And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their beasts also.** So God proved Himself the patient and merciful Lord, and Jesus Christ, the spiritual Rock, who accompanied the host, made them a gift of the water. V. 12. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not,** because they had not firmly, unconditionally, and confidently placed their humble trust in His word, **to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel,** to give evidence before the eyes of the children of Israel that He was the Holy One, **therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.** Neither of them would have this privilege, since by their fleshly zeal and disgust they had distorted and obscured before the eyes of the people the image of Jehovah Himself; neither of them would enter the Land of Promise. The occasional discontent which manifests itself in the lives of Christians, though usually a sin of weakness, is highly displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and often brings some evidence of His displeasure upon the offenders. V. 13. **This is the water of Meribah** (strife), **because the children of Israel strove with the Lord,** in murmuring against His dispensations, **and He was sanctified in them,** both by exposing the unbelief of the people and by punishing the weakness of Moses and Aaron. Cp. Ps. 106, 32. 33. This incident is a warning, lest any one become secure. Even firm and tested Christians are not safe against temptation and falling, against disobedience, foolishness, doubt, unbelief. It is fortunate that the merciful God does not desert His children at such times, but renews faith in their hearts and keeps them safe unto the end.

THE REFUSAL OF THE EDOMITES TO GRANT ISRAEL PASSAGE. — V. 14. **And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom,** since the plan of entering into Canaan from the east made it necessary for the people to pass through the country inhabited by the descendants of Edom, **Thus saith thy brother Israel,** for the two nations were descended from brothers, **Thou knowest all the travel** (trouble) **that hath befallen us,** the long and arduous desert journey which had fallen to the lot of the children of Israel after all the vicissitudes of the land of Egypt; v. 15. **how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers;** v. 16. **and when we cried unto the Lord, He heard our voice and sent an Angel,** the Angel of the Lord in a special sense, the Son of God Himself, who was the Leader of the host of Israel, Ex. 14, 19; 23, 20; 33, 2, **and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border;** v. 17. **let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country; we will not pass through the fields or through the vineyards,** in an irregular, careless, and straggling manner of marching, or in a way which permitted individual foraging, **neither will we drink of the water of the wells,** that is, take the water without paying for it; **we will go by the king's highway,** the great public

and military road, built and maintained at the expense of the nation; **we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed through thy borders.** V. 18. **And Edom,** that is, the king of the Edomites, in the name of his people, **said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.** To the very ungracious refusal is added the menacing threat, which emphasized the denial of the petition. V. 19. **And the children of Israel,** through their representatives, **said unto him, We will go by the highway; and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it,** the people of the country were not to suffer any inconvenience or loss by reason of this journey through their land; **I will only,** without doing anything else, **go through on my feet;** literally, "It isn't anything, it isn't really a serious matter for which I am asking, just a small favor, I merely want to pass through afoot." V. 20. **And he said, Thou shalt not go through.** The refusal of the king of Edom was definite and final. **And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand;** the king mobilized his army and made ready to attack Israel, as soon as the latter would cross his border. V. 21. **Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border; wherefore Israel turned away from him.** The Lord had them change their proposed itinerary, probably because He did not want to have the people become discouraged by war. The children of Edom are often represented in Scriptures as the enemies of the Lord's people and as a type of the unbelievers of all times. The children of this world, in spite of their apparent attitude of friendliness so frequently shown, will do everything in their power to hinder the children of God from obtaining eternal salvation.

THE DEATH OF AARON. — V. 22. **And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came unto Mount Hor,** the exact location of which cannot now be determined, although it was probably near the place where the city of Petra was later built, southeast of their last camping-place. V. 23. **And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor,** at the station called Moserah, Deut. 10, 6, **by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,** v. 24. **Aaron shall be gathered unto his people,** be joined to the number of those that had gone before, to await the great resurrection; **for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah;** both he and Moses had at that time become guilty of striving with the Lord. V. 25. **Take Aaron and Eleazar, his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor;** v. 26. **and strip Aaron of his garments,** the special garments distinctive of the high priest's office, **and put them upon Eleazar, his son; and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people and shall die there.** V. 27. **And Moses did as the Lord commanded; and they went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.** V. 28. **And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar, his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount. And Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount,** probably after attending to the proper burial of Aaron. V. 29. **And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead,** his death having taken place on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after the departure from Egypt, chap. 33, 37. 38, when he was one hundred and twenty-three years old, Ex. 7, 7, **they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.** All believers have the comforting assurance that their death, though a consequence of sin, takes place according to God's will, the grave being the body's resting-place until the great day of the final resurrection.

CHAPTER 21.

The Journey around the Land of Edom.

THE KING OF ARAD SUBDUED. — V. 1. **And when King Arad, the Canaanite,** literally, "the Canaanite, king of Arad," **which dwelt in the south,** in the extreme southern part of Canaan, next to the Wilderness of Paran and the Desert of Zin, **heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies,** along the road which the Israelitish spies had taken more than a generation ago, **then he fought against Israel,** made a sudden attack upon their army, **and took some of them prisoners.** V. 2. **And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, If Thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.** V. 3. **And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel,** He heard their earnest prayer, in which they placed their entire trust in Him alone, **and delivered up the Canaanites,** gave them into the hands of Israel; **and they utterly destroyed them and their cities; and he,** Moses, **called the name of the place Hormah** (utter destruction). Cp. chap. 14, 15. Thus the Lord, even before the children of Israel moved away toward the south, in order to march around the country of Edom, gave His people evidence of His almighty assistance, lest they should become too disheartened at the prospect of the long journey before them.

THE FIERY SERPENTS. — V. 4. **And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of**

the Red Sea, southward, along the western border of Edom, through the Wilderness of Paran, **to compass the land of Edom,** whose dominion extended almost to the Elanitic Gulf, the eastern arm of the Red Sea; **and the soul of the people was much discouraged,** filled with impatience, **because of the way.** To turn back once more, after reaching the boundary of the Land of Promise, imposed too great a strain upon their trust in God. V. 5. **And the people spake against God and against Moses,** not rebelling openly, but murmuring against the divine guidance and the leading of Moses, **Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread,** the manna. The Hebrew brings out the peevishness of the complaint: "For not is there bread, and not is there water, and our soul feels nausea over this miserable bread." They saw before them only a hopeless existence, an endless desert journey, ending with a miserable death in the midst of the dreary wastes. V. 6. **And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people,** whose bite filled the wound with a burning venom, very deadly, **and they bit the people,** who were unable to rid themselves of the plague; **and much people of Israel died.** V. 7. **Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee;** the punishment which the Lord visited upon them worked a knowledge of their sins in them, brought them to repentance. **Pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people,** assumed the rôle of mediator, as he had done so often. V. 8. **And the Lord said unto Moses,** in a command which was adapted to the situation and was of great typical significance, **Make thee a fiery serpent,** cast a figure which is an exact reproduction of one, **and set it upon a pole,** like a standard; **and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.** The reference is, of course, not to a casual glance, which even an unbelieving Israelite might cast upon the figure, but to the look of faith resting upon the divine promise. For such a look was an acknowledgment of sin, a longing for deliverance from its penalty, and a trusting in the means appointed by God for healing. V. 9. **And Moses made a serpent of brass,** as much in form and appearance like the fiery serpents as possible, **and put it upon a pole. And it came to pass that, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass,** that is, if he looked at it with the faith which the occasion required, **he lived.** It was because the Israelites, with their sin, tempted Christ, that they were destroyed by the serpents, 1 Cor. 10, 9. And, on the other hand, because they had faith in the promises of God, they were healed. Note that the figure made by Moses was a type of Christ, John 3, 15. 16. God sent His Son in the form of our sinful flesh, but without sin. And Christ, the Holy One of God, was lifted up on the cross to expiate the sin of all mankind, which lay upon Him. No matter who it is among sinful men, if he but looks upon the crucified Christ in faith, he will not perish, but have everlasting life.

FROM OBOTH TO JESHIMON. — V. 10. **And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in Oboth,** somewhere on the eastern side of the Land of Seir. V. 11. **And they journeyed from Oboth and pitched at Ijeabarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising,** on the eastern boundary of the land of Moab. V. 12. **From thence they removed and pitched in the Valley of Zared,** a small river which flows into the southeastern corner of the Dead Sea. V. 13. **From thence they removed and pitched on the other side of Arnon,** a small river which flows into the Dead Sea from the east, midway between its northern and southern extremities, **which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites; for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.** Their camp here was beyond, that is, on the south side of, the river Arnon, and east of the territory of Moab. V. 14. **Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord,** probably a collection of epics dealing with the adventures of the children of Israel during their desert journey and until they gained possession of the Land of Promise, **What He did in the Red Sea and in the brooks of Arnon,** the various tributaries which unite to form the Arnon, v. 15. **and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar and lieth upon the border of Moab.** The quotation offers some difficulties, since it is taken out of its connection, but may probably be rendered as follows: And onward (Jehovah led them) unto the Red Sea, and to the brooks of Arnon, and to the slope of the brooks which extends to the dwelling of Ar and flanks the boundary of Moab. The words reflect, in a measure, the heroic mood which possessed the children of Israel as they came near the end of their journey. V. 16. **And from thence they went to Beer; that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.** The people, having dug a well under the direction of Moses, by the command of God, found excellent water, and therefore praised the Lord in a song of thanksgiving. V. 17. **Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.** V. 18. **The princes digged the well,** or, well dug for the princes, **the nobles of the people digged it,** hollowed it out, **by the direction of the lawgiver,** that is, with their scepters, as the symbols of their authority, **with their staves,** since they directed the work. **And**

from the wilderness they went to Mattanah, v. 19. **and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,** v. 20. **and from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.** So they reached the wide valley which is in the fields of Moab, a plateau which on the one side overlooks the desert on the other slopes down to the Dead Sea. While the location of these camps, for the most part, is a matter of conjecture, the text plainly shows that the army of Israel, having marched around the Land of Seir and skirted the extreme edge of the land of the Moabites, pretty well out in the Arabian Desert, now turned westward, along the southern banks of the tributaries of the Arnon, until the host reached the more thickly settled portions of the lands under Moabitish dominion. So God had made good His promise to the people and led them safely and well to the very boundaries of Canaan, although they were still on the eastern side of the Dead Sea and the river Jordan.

The Overthrow of Sihon and Og. — V. 21. **And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon, king of the Amorites,** the heathen nation which occupied the country north of the Arnon, **saying,** v. 22. **Let me pass through thy land; we will not turn into the fields or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well, but we will go along by the king's highway until we be past thy borders.** The message and its import agreed exactly with that sent to the Edomites some months before, chap. 20, 17. V. 23. **And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border; but Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel into the wilderness,** to drive out the invaders; **and he came to Jahaz,** a place in the southeastern part of his dominion, **and fought against Israel.** In this case, however, the children of Israel were not hindered by special considerations, as in the case of the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, Deut. 2, 5. 9. 37, but had received the express command to give battle, Deut. 2, 24. V. 24. **And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword,** without giving quarter or showing mercy, **and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon,** who lived mainly north of the Jabbok; **for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.** V. 25. **And Israel took all these cities; and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof.** V. 26. **For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, the king of the Amorites,** his capital, **who had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon,** all the territory from the Arnon northward to the Jabbok, beyond which he was not able to penetrate on account of the strength of the border fortifications, v. 24. V. 27. **Wherefore they that speak in proverbs,** the poets that were inspired to write of this victory, **say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared,** since Israel was now occupying the land which the Amorites had wrested from Moab; v. 28. **for there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon,** namely, at the time when this king had gone forth on his campaigns of conquest; **it hath consumed Ar of Moab,** the former capital of the entire domain of Moab, **and the lords of the high places of Arnon,** the men in command of the border fortifications. V. 29. **Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh;** the final destruction of Moab was only a matter of time. **He,** Chemosh, the chief god of the Moabites, Jer. 48, 7, **hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon, king of the Amorites,** unable to save them from the hands of the enemy. V. 30. **We have shot at them,** we came and overthrew them; **Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth unto Medeba,** or, with fire unto Medeba. The children of Israel had completely subdued the land, not only its capital, but the entire length and breadth of the country, to its extreme southern and northern boundaries. V. 31. **Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites,** occupied the entire country and camped there. V. 32. **And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer,** a city toward the northeast, near the territory of the Ammonites, **and they took the villages thereof and drove out the Amorites that were there,** thus completing the conquest of the nation. V. 33. **And they,** the children of Israel, **turned and went up by the way of Bashan,** toward the north and west; **and Og, the king of Bashan, went out against them, he and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.** V. 34. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Fear him not; for I have delivered him into thy hand and all his people and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.** With this glorious promise of God to strengthen them the children of Israel went forth to battle, an invincible host. V. 35. **So they smote him and his sons and all his people, until there was none left him alive; and they possessed his land.** Thus Israel, courageous through its confidence in Jehovah, was able to overthrow mighty kings, a fact which is so often referred to in later times, Deut. 3, 1—11; Ps. 135, 11; 136, 19. 20. All this Israel wrought through faith, Heb. 11, 33. He that truly believes in the Lord has the strength to conquer all his enemies, and will gladly give thanks to God for His goodness and mercy.

CHAPTER 22.

King Balak Hires Balaam.

THE FIRST INVITATION REFUSED.—V. 1. **And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in the Plains of Moab on this side Jordan,** on the eastern side, **by Jericho,** for these rich bottom-lands had formerly been a part of Moabitis and were still called by the name of their former owners. V. 2. **And Balak, the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.** The Moabites had not interfered with the children of Israel while the latter journeyed along their eastern border, but had even sold them bread and water, Deut. 2, 29. At the same time, they seem to have entertained the hope that the mighty nation of the Amorites would easily overcome the invaders. This expectation was now rudely shattered. V. 3. **And Moab was sore afraid of the people because they were many; and Moab was distressed,** filled with a sickening terror even to the point of nausea, **because of the children of Israel.** V. 4. **And Moab said unto the elders of Midian,** the two nations evidently being allies, **Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us as the ox licketh up the grass of the field,** for that is the impression which one receives, since cattle will sometimes crop off the grass to its very roots. The word carries with it the idea of complete destruction. **And Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time,** as Moses notes for the sake of historic accuracy and completeness. V. 5. **He sent messengers, therefore,** as the sequel shows, at the suggestion of his Midianitish allies, who may have learned of Balaam's reputation on their journeys, **unto Balaam, the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people,** probably near the Euphrates, in Mesopotamia, **to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt; behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me** (note the variation of the same thought for the sake of emphasis); v. 6. **come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people,** afflict them with an evil which will render them powerless; **for they are too mighty for me; peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I wot** (know) **that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.** This was the reputation which Balaam had in all the surrounding countries, and this fact is noted in the message, in order to make Balaam willing to grant the request. V. 7. **And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand,** for the rich presents were to induce Balaam to come all the more readily. **And they came unto Balaam and spake unto him the words of Balak.** Balaam was not a common wizard, indulging in cheap tricks and sleight-of-hand performances for the purpose of awing the multitude. He was, indeed, engaged in the business of divination, of soothsaying, but he knew also of the true God, for the tradition of the God of Abraham, of the true, living God, had been handed down in many branches of the family of Shem. That Balaam was well known among the Midianites of this section of Arabia (to be distinguished from the Midianites of the Sinaitic Peninsula) appears from the fact that he afterward gave the heathen the advice which plunged Israel into idolatry and immorality, and almost brought about their ruin, chap. 31, 16; Rev. 2, 14. V. 8. **And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me,** for he knew that the God of Israel was the true God and feared to do anything contrary to His will. **And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.** The false prophet was merely trying to put off the time when he must refuse, since he knew that the Lord would never consent to a curse upon His people, but also since the reward in the hands of the messengers was a powerful argument to his avaricious soul. V. 9. **And God came unto Balaam,** He manifested Himself to him in some form, probably in a dream during the night, **and said, What men are these with thee?** The purpose of the searching question was to make Balaam realize the peril of his position in dealing with the messengers at all. V. 10. **And Balaam said unto God, Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying,** v. 11. **Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt which covereth the face of the earth; come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.** Balaam was careful to tell the Lord the whole truth, since he feared His almighty power. V. 12. **And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed,** and therefore all statements which were intended for curses would have no effect. V. 13. **And Balaam rose up in the morning and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.** This was a cunning way of putting it, for it withheld that part of God's message which might have broken off the negotiations definitely, and at the same time conveyed to the messengers of Balak the feeling of Balaam that personally he was not at all disinclined to come. The men undoubtedly understood the position and the inclination of Balaam, as the sequel shows. V. 14. **And the princes of Moab rose up; and they went unto Balak and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us,** thus intimating that it was merely a greater reward

which was needed to produce the desired effect. Note that the power of soothsaying and of its curses is not denied in this story, just as it is elsewhere recorded with gratitude that the Lord turned the curse into a blessing, Deut. 23, 5; Josh. 24, 10; Micah 6, 5; Neh. 13, 2. With God's permission the power of witchcraft is very great and should not be made a subject of foolish jesting. Satan is a powerful spirit, and his tools in this world often do great damage.

THE SECOND INVITATION ACCEPTED. — V. 15. **And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honorable than they.** So he had taken the hint which was conveyed to him by his messengers; he felt that it was merely a matter of coaxing the reluctant wizard by means of greater presents. V. 16. **And they came to Balaam and said to him, Thus saith Balak, the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me;** v. 17. **for I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me,** thus practically giving Balaam leave to mention his own reward. **Come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.** As a true heathen Balak apparently believed himself able to influence not only Balaam, but also that mysterious god that was directing Balaam's affairs. V. 18. **And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more.** These words sound very pious, but they merely reveal Balaam's real character. Much as he desired distinction before men, he coveted wealth still more, and his answer was merely intended as a feeler, in order to find out just how far the messengers were permitted to go. V. 19. **Now, therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more.** V. 20. **And God came unto Balaam at night and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.** This was not a concession due to a change of mind, for God expressly stipulates that only that saying dared to be pronounced over Israel which He would give to Balaam. It was God's way of dealing with Balaam's defiant mood. Jehovah's purpose may have been, as one commentator has it, to reveal Himself in such a mighty manner before the eyes of Balaam as to cause him to turn to the true God in real change of heart. But one fact is clear, namely, that through the disobedience of Balaam the Lord brought a blessing upon His people and caused one of the most beautiful Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament to be spoken. V. 21. **And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.** Balaam is an example of warning, both in his attitude toward God, from whom he obtained permission to go with the Moabitish princes only by his defiant persistence, and in his love of filthy lucre. Truly, the love of money is a root of all evil and has caused many men to err from the faith and to be drowned in destruction and perdition, 1 Tim. 6, 9. 10.

BALAAM'S ASS SPEAKS. — V. 22. **And God's anger was kindled because he** (Balaam) **went,** because he was going with a blind and dogged determination to carry out his own plan and to obtain the promised reward. **And the Angel of the Lord,** the Son of God, who, as so often in the Old Testament, assumed this form, v. 35, **stood in the way,** in the road on which he journeyed to the country of the Midianites and the Moabites, **for an adversary against him,** to cause him to come to his senses even at this stage. **Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.** V. 23. **And the ass saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and His sword drawn in His hand.** In the same measure that Balaam allowed his insincerity and covetousness to blind him, the dumb and irrational brute, by a miracle of God, became clear-sighted. **And the ass turned aside out of the way and went into the field,** to escape the threatening sword, the instrument of God's wrath. **And Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way,** to make her go back on the road. V. 24. **But the Angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side and a wall on that side,** thus making it impossible for the beast to turn aside very far. V. 25. **And when the ass saw the Angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall,** to crowd past the fearsome apparition, **and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again,** angry over this behavior, for which he was not able to account except on the basis of meanness. V. 26. **And the Angel of the Lord went further and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left,** since His person filled the entire space. V. 27. **And when the ass saw the Angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam,** for it was impossible for her to proceed. **And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff,** such as travelers commonly carried with them. V. 28. **And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass,** giving her power to speak articulately and distinctly, in the speech of human beings, 2 Pet. 2, 16; **and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?** V. 29. **And Balaam,** in his excitement apparently not at all taken aback by the strange phenomenon of the dumb brute's speaking, **said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me,** made a fool of him; **I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.** V. 30. **And the**

ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he answered, Nay. If the beast had shown a mean disposition before, then the attitude of Balaam and the treatment which he accorded her might have been justified to some extent; but as it was, he had to admit the justice of her plea. V. 31. **Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way,** He made the form of the Angel visible to the eyes of Balaam, as He had done before in the case of his ass, **and His sword drawn in His hand,** ready for sudden slaughter and destruction. **And he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face,** overcome, at last, by the terror of Jehovah. V. 32. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee because thy way is perverse before Me;** the way which Balaam had chosen was a steep and slippery one, and not at all in agreement with the will of God, whence there was danger that it would land him in destruction. V. 33. **And the ass saw Me and turned from Me these three times; unless she had turned from Me, surely now also I had slain thee and saved her alive.** So the brute had actually saved Balaam's life by her strange behavior. V. 34. **And Balaam said unto the Angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that Thou stoodest in the way against me. Now, therefore, if it displease Thee, I will get me back again.** This addition spoiled the confession of sins with which Balaam had begun to address the Angel; they show that there had been no change of heart; he was still longing for the reward of unrighteousness and intended to yield only to force. V. 35. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men;** since there was no trace of real repentance in his heart, he should continue in his undertaking; **but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak.** This was to be distinctly understood and obediently followed by Balaam. **So Balaam went with the princes of Balak,** believing that he would still find ways and means to circumvent the will of the Lord and get the coveted money. He is a type of a blind and hardened sinner.

BALAK'S CHARGE TO BALAAM. — V. 36. **And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast,** in the extreme northeastern section of the country, where the sources of the Arnon are found in the hills of the desert. This showed the eagerness of Balak and the confidence which he placed in the soothsayer's power. V. 37. **And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? Wherefore camest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honor?** Balak felt that he must reprove Balaam at least to that extent, since the wizard's behavior at the first invitation was such as to imply doubt in the king's ability or willingness to bestow his bounty. V. 38. **And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I have come unto thee,** a statement which implied that his coming had been connected with some difficulties; **have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.** This was not a statement of humble submission to the will of God, but one by which Balaam intended to clear his skirts in advance. The terror of the Lord was still upon him, and he felt that he would finally be obliged to submit to the will of God. At the same time, he indicated that, so far as he was concerned, he would gladly accede to the king's wishes. V. 39. **And Balaam went with Balak,** ready, if possible, to do his bidding; **and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth,** a city or town near the hills which run parallel to the Jordan. V. 40. **And Balak offered oxen and sheep,** sacrifices of prayer which he apparently intended for the true God, whose favor he hoped to gain in this manner, **and sent to Balaam and to the princes that were with him.** To share in the sacrificial feast of the king was considered a great honor. V. 41. **And it came to pass on the morrow that Balak took Balaam and brought him up into the high places of Baal,** to Bamot-Baal, the first height from which a person could get a glimpse of Israel's camp, **that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.** Balak acted upon the idea that Balaam must have at least a part of the children of Israel before his eyes if his curse was to be effective. As the Son of God withstood Balaam in his evil intention of bringing a curse upon God's people, so He now strengthens and upholds His Church in all its trials and keeps its enemies from doing it lasting harm.

CHAPTER 23.

Balaam's Attempts at Cursing Israel.

THE FIRST SACRIFICE AND PROPHETIC UTTERANCE. — V. 1. **And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams,** namely, one animal of either group for each altar. Balaam here presumed upon a show of authority which he did not possess, and he dedicated his sacrifices to Jehovah, although they were offered on a place consecrated to the loathsome idol of the heathen. His idea apparently was to gain the favor of the Lord by

the rich offering and cause Him to permit the cursing of Israel. Balak here shows great cunning in leading Balaam where he could see only a small part of the people, lest the sight of the entire host would intimidate the soothsayer and keep him from uttering his curses. V. 2. **And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram.** It was a pompous pretense at piety, and all the more abominable in the sight of the Lord since it combined heathenism with the worship of the true God. V. 3. **And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go,** the king was to remain at the altar, while Balaam went forth to seek good auguries, or omens, in some signs or portents of nature, for in that way many of the heathen diviners pretended to tell the future; **peradventure the Lord will come to meet me; and whatsoever He showeth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place,** to an empty, solitary peak of the hill, from where he would have an unobstructed view in every direction, for he hoped to receive or discover in the phenomena of nature a revelation from Jehovah. V. 4. **And God met Balaam,** in some form or manifestation which is not described in detail; **and he** (Balaam) **said unto Him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram.** It is significant that the Lord ignored this statement completely; He wanted nothing of such sacrifices. V. 5. **And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak,** giving him the words which he was to utter. V. 6. **And he** (Balaam) **returned unto him** (Balak), **and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he and all the princes of Moab,** anxious to hear the curse upon Israel which Balaam was hired to utter. V. 7. **And he took up his parable,** his prophetic utterance, spoken in a state of ecstasy, **and said, Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the East, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel,** namely, by means of maledictions. V. 8. **How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?** How could Balaam be expected to pronounce the doom of wrath upon those that were the blessed of the Lord, or maledictions upon the head of those whom the Lord had chosen for His own? V. 9. **For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him,** namely, Israel personified, as the congregation of Jehovah. **Lo, the people shall dwell alone,** not in absolute seclusion, but as a people consecrated to the Lord, **and shall not be reckoned among the nations,** shall have nothing in common with their idolatrous beliefs and practises. It is significant that Israel maintained its independence only as long as this held true. V. 10. **Who can count the dust of Jacob, Gen. 13, 15, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?** Even the fourth part of the nation, in allusion to the four divisions of the camp, was beyond ordinary computation. **Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!** Since God was present with His people and sanctified them with the righteousness which He desires, therefore it was a privilege to belong to this people and to share also in the final blessing which the Lord held out before them. He desired the full, perfect, and indestructible salvation which the Lord had promised to those who would be faithful to Him till the end. The same statements apply to the congregation of the New Testament; for all those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior in true faith and remain faithful to Him until He calls them home, will rejoice at the coming of the end, for that means eternal salvation. V. 11. **And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether;** Balaam had laid upon them the full blessing of Jehovah. V. 12. **And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?** His excuse was that he was constrained to speak as he did, indicating that he would rather not have made his statements as he did. V. 13. **And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them; thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all; and curse me them from thence.** So Balak blamed the failure on the conditions and on the locality, and was willing to make another attempt. Thus the enemies of the Lord try time and again to overthrow His will, but they can do nothing to thwart His counsel.

The Second Sacrifice and Prophetic Utterance. — V. 14. **And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah,** to a high plateau of the mountain range which overlooks the Plains of Moab, **and built seven altars,** as before, **and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.** V. 15. **And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering,** maintaining the position of the devout worshiper praying for the fulfilment of his desire, **while I meet the Lord yonder,** for the purpose of receiving omens concerning the success of their venture, the same mixture of proper religious rites with the ceremonies of heathenism as before. V. 16. **And the Lord met Balaam,** as after the first sacrifice, **and put a word in his mouth and said, Go again unto Balak and say thus;** the exact form of the prophetic utterance was prescribed to him. V. 17. **And when he came to him** (Balak), **behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the Lord spoken?** V. 18. **And he**

took up his parable and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor. The king was to lift up heart and mind to the elevated plane which agreed with the message that was about to be delivered to him. V. 19. **God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent,** a statement which reproved the thought of Balak that God might take back His word concerning the blessing upon Israel. **Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?** V. 20. **Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.** The unchangeability of the divine counsels is a necessary consequence of the divine faithfulness, as an expression of the essence of the Lord. The blessing which He had put into the mouth of Balaam after the first sacrifice could not be canceled, and the soothsayer was not in a position to cancel it, much as he personally might be inclined to do so. V. 21. **He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel,** no trouble or affliction. Since the Lord found no criminal wickedness, no moral and spiritual rottenness of a kind that would be followed by a curse, this being true of the people in their covenant relation to God, therefore His blessing was still with them. **The Lord, his God, is with him, and the shout of a king is among them;** they are full of happiness and rejoicing because Jehovah is living in their midst as king, Ex. 15, 18; Deut. 33, 5. V. 22. **God brought them out of Egypt,** that occasion being the chief instance when He proved Himself their King, and this mighty work was still going on; **he** (Israel) **hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn,** of the wild ox, which was considered the embodiment of fierceness and indomitable strength. V. 23. **Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel;** the Israelites were not obliged to resort to any questionable methods of witchcraft, because they had the immediate revelation of the true God in their midst, who personally led the host and equipped the army with power. **According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, What hath God wrought!** that is, whenever it was needed, at the right time, God took care to reveal to His people His counsel and will in His Word. V. 24. **Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion,** like a lioness setting out to seek food, **and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain.** In short, Israel, with the true God on his side, was invincible, for the blessing of Jehovah rested upon him. The words of blessing given Judah, Gen. 49, 9, were hereby transferred to the whole people. V. 25. **And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all;** since Balaam would apparently not curse the people, as Balak sees with indignation, therefore he also should not bless them, that is, he should discontinue his prophetic utterances entirely. V. 26. **But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?** He was still under the influence of the terror of the Lord and must set aside all personal preferences. V. 27. **And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place;** he still believed that the location and the conditions had something to do with the soothsayer's power; **peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.** V. 28. **And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor,** a peak in the mountain range which ran parallel to the Jordan and the Dead Sea, **that looketh toward Jeshimon,** with an unobstructed view over the entire country, also the wilderness. V. 29. **And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.** V. 30. **And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar,** still with the idea that his object could be gained, which was, of course, rank foolishness. As the Lord held His sheltering hand over the people of the covenant at that time, so He now lives and reigns in the midst of His congregation, the people of the New Testament. In and with Him the Church is invincible and will conquer all her enemies.

CHAPTER 24.

Balaam's Last Prophecy.

A THIRD BLESSING. — V. 1. **And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel,** this conviction having rather been forced upon him by his double experience, **he went not, as at other times,** as upon the two previous occasions, **to seek for enchantments,** to look for auguries or omens after the manner of heathen soothsayers, **but he set his face toward the wilderness,** toward the fields where the children of Israel were encamped, for he could overlook the entire host. V. 2. **And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes,** he was near enough to distinguish the various groups as they were arranged in camps about the Tabernacle; **and the Spirit of God came upon him,** for the Lord now threw him into a state of ecstasy and used him as His instrument of prophecy. And

Balaam also, feeling the uselessness of restraint, yielded the more readily, although it cannot be said that his heart was in his task. V. 3. **And he took up his parable,** his prophetic utterance, **and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said;** v. 4. **he hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.** It was a revelation of God which came to Balaam by the Spirit of God. His mind was closed to all external influences, and he sank to the ground, overwhelmed with the ecstasy of the manner of communication which came to him. V. 5. **How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!** V. 6. **As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters.** The seer beholds not only the habitations of Israel as desirable places to live, but also the land as being most pleasant, for the conception of the aloe-trees breathing out their fragrance, and of the cedar-trees standing in their strength by the water-courses, leads us away from the ordinary beauties of nature to a conception which properly pictures the delights of the spiritual Israel of all ages. V. 7. **He shall pour the water out of his buckets,** for they would overflow with moisture, **and his seed shall be in many waters,** his descendants would find their homes along fruitful streams; **and his king shall be higher than Agag,** which was the hereditary title of the Amalekite kings, **and his kingdom shall be exalted.** Above all the enmity of the world as represented by the kingdoms of the heathen, the people of the Lord would be secure in their relation to Jehovah, blessed with prosperity and glory. V. 8. **God brought him** (Israel) **forth out of Egypt; he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn,** of the wild ox, which was noted for its fierceness; **he shall eat up the nations, his enemies,** devour them in his great wrath and power, **and shall break their bones,** utterly crush them, **and pierce them through with his arrows,** or, break their arrows, their weapons of warfare, to pieces. V. 9. **He couched, he lay down as a lion and as a great lion; who shall stir him up?** Cp. Gen. 49, 9. **Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.** This last contained a warning to Balak, for it intimated that the blessing of Abraham and Isaac, Gen. 12, 3; 27, 29, had been laid upon the entire nation of Israel, and there was danger in being the enemy of such a people. V. 10. **And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together,** as an expression of his disappointment and disgust; **and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.** V. 11. **Therefore now flee thou to thy place,** go back home as quickly as possible; **I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor.** Here the irony with which Balak derided the dependence of Balaam upon Jehovah is plainly shown. Since Balaam's power of divination was not strong enough to overcome the opposition of Jehovah, he must take the consequences. V. 12. **And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me,** saying, v. 13. **If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak?** Cp. chap. 22, 18. V. 14. **And now, behold, I go unto my people,** the breach between him and Balak was made; **come, therefore, and I will advertise, teach, thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.** All restraint was now removed from Balaam; he wanted to teach and at the same time advise Balak as to his conduct toward the invaders and their overwhelming strength.

OF THE STAR OF JACOB. — V. 15. **And he took up his parable and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said;** v. 16. **he hath said which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High,** who had been given this wonderful knowledge in a revelation, **which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open,** v. 4: v. 17. **I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh.** What Balaam saw here in a vision would not happen in the near future, as men count time, but at a far distant period. **There shall come a Star out of Jacob,** as the symbol of the power and majesty of a great ruler, **and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel,** Gen. 49, 10, also a picture of a future mighty king in Israel, namely, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Lord; **and shall smite the corners of Moab,** strike down its people on both sides, **and destroy all the children of Sheth,** of confusion, for the Moabites were noted as men of wild and unrestrained warfare. Although this prophecy, in type, was fulfilled when Israel gained dominion over this and other heathen nations, its ideal fulfilment came in Jesus Christ, whose spiritual power has been extended to include also heathen nations everywhere, for men from all nations have bowed their heads under His scepter. V. 18. **And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly,** shall gain strength and dominion. The fulfilment of this prophecy began with the conquest of Edom at the time of David, 2 Sam. 8, 14; 1 Kings 11, 15. 16, but was not fully completed until the coming of

the most majestic Ruler, at whose footstool God has laid all His enemies, Ps. 110. V. 19. **Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion,** for out of that people, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Rom. 9, 5, **and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city;** no matter where the remnant of the people might be in hiding, the spirit of this mighty King would find them; they must yield to Him or face everlasting punishment. In accordance with the peculiarity of prophecy, which combines visions of far-distant events with those that are comparatively near at hand, the prophet now reveals the future of other heathen nations. V. 20. **And when he,** Balaam, in his condition of ecstasy, **looked on Amalek, he took up his parable and said, Amalek was the first of the nations,** namely, to take up weapons of warfare against Israel; **but his latter end shall be that he perish forever,** he should be utterly destroyed, 1 Sam. 15, 7. 8. V. 21. **And he looked on the Kenites,** a nation which had shown itself friendly to Israel, chap. 10, 29—32; Gen. 15, 19, **and took up his parable and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock;** their habitations were chiefly in the mountainous regions of the Sinaitic Peninsula. V. 22. **Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive;** or: Should the Kenite be destroyed, until Asshur shall lead thee away captive? The answer is an emphatic "No." The outward association of this people with the children of Israel gained security for them even when the Kenites were led away into the Assyrian captivity. V. 23. **And he took up his parable and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!** The judgment of God upon the disobedient and idolatrous enemies of His people would be so terrible that men would despair of their lives in seeing its severity. V. 24. **And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish forever.** Both the Semitic nations of the East, which included the inhabitants of Assyria, and those of the West, which occupied the country between Assyria and Palestine, Gen. 10, 21, would be overthrown by a powerful nation coming from the Northwest, with ships coming from Greece, by way of Cyprus. The historic relations are not yet definitely shown, but the prophecy of doom stands out with great distinctness; for the gist of the utterance is that God will destroy all the enemies that oppose His will, and give victory to His people. V. 25. **And Balaam rose up and went and returned to his place,** not to Mesopotamia, as history shows, but to the land of the Midianites. Far from being overcome by the power of the Lord, he apparently hardened his heart and gave the Midianites the advice to effect the overthrow of the Israelites by means of idolatry, chap. 31, 8. 16. **And Balak also went his way.**

CHAPTER 25.

Idolatry and Whoredom in Israel.

THE SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT. — V. 1. **And Israel abode in Shittim,** in the fields or plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan, **and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.** Balaam, having failed in his intention to curse Israel and thus to earn the reward of unrighteousness which his covetous heart craved, had sought revenge by giving the princes of Midian a bit of devilish counsel, namely, that of overcoming the enemy by strategy, by tempting them to indulge in sins of the flesh. Cp. Num. 31, 16; Rev. 2, 14. Shittim is named because it was at this city, at the northern end of the steppes of Moab, that the approach of the Midianites and Moabites took place, as they undertook to conquer the people of God through sensual lust. V. 2. **And they,** the Moabites, **called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods.** In this manner the temptation was set into action: the women of Moab were employed to entice the men of Israel, to form acquaintances and friendships with them, to invite them to the sacrificial meals in honor of their heathen idols. It was thus that both spiritual and bodily whoredoms were soon committed, for the most brazen shamelessness, indulgence in the vilest immorality, was connected with the cult of the heathen idols. V. 3. **And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor,** the majority of the people became guilty of the sins connected with the worship of this heathen idol, for it was in his honor that women and virgins openly sacrificed their honor. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,** for by indulging in lasciviousness in this instance the people became doubly guilty. V. 4. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people,** either because they themselves were leaders in the transgression or because they neglected their responsibility of hindering the spread of the sin, **and hang them up before the Lord against the sun,** out in the open before all the people, as a warning example, **that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel,** since the ringleaders at least had suffered their punishment. V. 5. **And Moses said unto the judges of Israel,** the men who were his assistants in governing the affairs of Israel, **Slay ye every one his men, the men from his tribe or division, that were joined unto Baal-peor.**

It was an order for a wholesale execution, for only in this manner could the wrath of God be appeased. This is an example of warning also for our days; for the Lord's hand is not shortened to punish, and the increasing worldliness in the midst of the Church challenges His interference.

The Zeal of Phinehas. — V. 6. **And, behold, one of the children of Israel came,** even while this execution was in progress, **and brought unto his brethren,** into the camp of the Israelites, **a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** full of terror at the manifestation of God's anger upon their nation. V. 7. **And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest,** and the next in order of succession for the office of high priest, **saw it,** namely, this brazen, challenging shamelessness, **he rose up from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand;** v. 8. **and he went after the man of Israel into the tent,** into the sleeping apartment, **and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague,** which the Lord had sent, **was stayed from the children of Israel.** The example of punishment which Phinehas carried out was an act of intercession, through which he appeased the wrath of God and saved the people from total annihilation. So it was counted unto him for righteousness forevermore, Ps. 106, 31. V. 9. **And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand,** including the heads and those that were put to death by the judges, 1 Cor. 10, 8. V. 10. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 11. **Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel while he was zealous for My sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy;** for all these acts of whoredom, in the nature of the case, were also idolatrous acts and took away the honor of the Lord, and Phinehas, in his official position and with the express knowledge and consent of Moses, defended the rights of Jehovah in the midst of His people. V. 12. **Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace,** and he should be assured that everything which the covenant implied would be granted; v. 13. **and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, to last as long as the Levitical priesthood endured; because he was zealous for his God and made an atonement for the children of Israel.** It was the zeal of Jehovah which had filled Phinehas and impelled him to put the daring sinners to death. V. 14. **Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house,** the house of a father, **among the Simeonites.** The elementary group among the Israelites was the family; the aggregation of families formed "the house of the father"; the aggregation of houses made the tribe; the aggregation of tribes constituted the commonwealth.3) V. 15. **And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people and of a chief house in Midian.** He is afterwards called king and numbered with the five kings of Midian who were slain by the Israelites, chap. 31, 8. All sins of the flesh are an abomination before the Lord and provoke Him to anger. It is therefore His earnest will that such evils be put away from the midst of the Christian congregation. If Christians neglect this duty, they become guilty of the sins which are going on in their midst unchecked.

The Command of God against the Midianites. — V. 16. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 17. **Vex the Midianites,** show your enmity, openly oppose them, **and smite them;** v. 18. **for they vex you,** prove themselves your most dangerous enemies, **with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor,** by seducing them to idolatrous practises, **and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.** Thus the zeal of Phinehas, the zeal for Jehovah, might be assumed by all the nation and the honor of the Lord be vindicated. It had been an extreme case of the grossest outrage that this princess had caused herself to be led into the sacred camp, to glorify lust, and to render it an act of service or worship. This command of God was carried out chap. 31, 1—12.

3) Maine, *Ancient Laws*, 126. 128.

CHAPTER 26.

The Numbering of Israel.

The Muster of the Host. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after the plague,** which struck the people on account of the idolatrous, adulterous practises introduced by the Midianites and Moabites, **that the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saying,** v. 2. **Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel,** this being the formal census before entering into the Land of Promise, **from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel,** as it was done in the

Wilderness of Sinai, chaps. 1 and 2. V. 3. **And Moses and Eleazar, the priest, spake with them, with regard to this mustering, in the Plains of Moab by Jordan,** on the eastern side, **near Jericho, saying,** v. 4. **Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward, as the Lord commanded Moses and the children of Israel which went forth out of the land of Egypt.** This is the heading or introduction to the enumeration of the people by their tribes. V. 5. **Reuben,** the eldest son of Israel: **the children of Reuben: Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the family of the Palluites;** v. 6. **of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites.** V. 7. **These are the families of the Reubenites; and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty** (43, 730). V. 8. **And the sons of Pallu: Eliab.** V. 9. **And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord;** v. 10. **and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died,** when the two Reubenites with their families, together with Korah and his servants or immediate followers, were swallowed by the abyss, **what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign,** chap. 16, 38; 1 Cor. 10, 6. V. 11. **Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not,** for they had not joined their father in his rebellion. Samuel, the prophet, was a member of this family, 1 Chron. 6, 22—28, as was Heman, the singer, 1 Chron. 25, 5. V. 12. **The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites;** v. 13. **of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.** V. 14. **These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred** (22,200). Note that the family of Obed, Gen. 46, 10, had become extinct, that Nemuel is equivalent with Jemuel, Ex. 6, 15, and Zohar with Zerah, Gen. 46, 10. V. 15. **The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites;** v. 16. **of Ozni** (or Ezbon, Gen. 46, 16), **the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites;** v. 17. **of Arod, the family of the Arodites; of Areli, the family of the Arelites.** V. 18. **These are the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred** (40,500). V. 19. **The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan,** Gen. 38. V. 20. **And the sons of Judah after their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites.** V. 21. **And the sons of Pharez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.** V. 22. **These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred** (76,500). Cp. Gen. 38, 6 ff.; 46, 12; 1 Chron. 2, 3—5. V. 23. **Of the sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Pua** (or, Phuvah), **the family of the Punites;** v. 24. **of Jashub** (or, Job), **the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.** V. 25. **These are the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred** (64,300). V. 26. **Of the sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.** V. 27. **These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred** (60,500). Cp. Gen. 46, 14. While the three tribes under Reuben had decreased, due, probably, to the same transgressions and their punishments, all those under Judah had increased. V. 28. **The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim,** both of whom had been elevated to the position of heads of tribes, Gen. 48. V. 29. **Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begat Gilead; of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites.** V. 30. **These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer** (or Abiezer, Josh. 17, 2), **the family of the Jeezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites;** v. 31. **and of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites;** v. 32. **and of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; and of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites.** V. 33. **And Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.** V. 34. **These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred** (52,700). V. 35. **These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; of Becher** (or Bered), **the family of the Bachrites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.** V. 36. **And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites.** V. 37. **These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that**

were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred (32,500). These are the sons of Joseph after their families. V. 38. The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram (or Ehi, Gen. 46, 21; or Aharah, 1 Chron. 8, 1), the family of the Ahiramites; v. 39. of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites (Muppim and Huppim, Gen. 46, 21). V. 40. And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites; and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. V. 41. These are the sons of Benjamin after their families; and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred (45,600). Note that the same man may have borne different names, or that grandsons appear as sons, since some of the men did not found distinct families. V. 42. These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites (Hushim, Gen. 46, 23). These are the families of Dan after their families. Only the most numerous and influential families are enumerated. V. 43. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred (64,400). V. 44. Of the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. V. 45. Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. V. 46. And the name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah. In this case, three families were founded by sons, and two by grandsons. V. 47. These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; who were fifty and three thousand and four hundred (53,400). V. 48. Of the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; v. 49. of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. V. 50. These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred (45,400). Cp. Gen. 46, 24; 1 Chron. 7, 30. V. 51. These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty (601,730). "A comparison of the totals here and in chapter 1 shows a small loss. The people which had grown so rapidly in Egypt had scarcely held its own through the wilderness, with its sins and judgments. That one generation merely filled the gaps made vacant by the death of that which preceded it shows that other than merely natural causes were at work in the wasting of the earlier generations and confirms the history of the wilderness life." (Gosman.)

Concerning the Divisions of the Land and the Levites. — V. 52. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 53. Unto these, in accordance with the census just taken, shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names, each tribe being given a territory whose extent should be proportionate to its own size. V. 54. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance; to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him, this consideration applying to the size of the tribal territory, as it would be known after the name of the head of the tribe. V. 55. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot, not only to avoid all dissatisfaction and complaint, but also to cause every tribe to accept the territory assigned to it as the gift of God, for so the outcome of the lot was generally regarded; according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. V. 56. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few. Thus the relative situation of each tribe's inheritance in Canaan was determined and, at the same time, all cause for dispute removed. V. 57. And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. V. 58. These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, which belonged to the Gershonites, the family of the Hebronites, which belonged to the Kohathites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, both of which belonged to the Merarites, the family of the Korathites, which belonged to the Kohathites. And Kohath begat Amram. V. 59. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt, Ex. 2, 1. 2; 6, 20; and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam, their sister. V. 60. And unto Aaron was born Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. V. 61. And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord, Lev. 10, 1. 2. V. 62. And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward; for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel, chap. 18, 20. V. 63. These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar, the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the Plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho; the census was made under their direction. V. 64. But among these there

was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron, the priest, numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai, chaps. 1 and 2; the entire generation of people who had been twenty years old and more at the time of the departure out of Egypt had passed away in the wilderness. Cp. chap. 14, 29. 38. V. 65. **For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness.** Cp. 1 Cor. 10, 5. 6. **And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun,** the two spies that had opposed the majority report with such emphasis. The judgments of the just and holy God are often carried out with terrifying exactness, as a standing warning to the unbelieving generation of all times.

CHAPTER 27.

A Special Precept of Inheritances. Joshua Moses' Successor.

THE GRIEVANCE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD ADJUSTED. — V. 1. **Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters,** the ones who were concerned in this question: **Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.** V. 2. **And they stood before Moses and before Eleazar, the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** they stepped before the official representatives of the people with a petition, saying, v. 3. **Our father died in the wilderness,** as did all the other men of the older generation, **and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah,** he had not joined the ranks of the rebels at that time, chap. 16, 11; **but died in his own sin,** the common transgression of all those that died in the wilderness, **and had no sons.** V. 4. **Why should the name of our father be done away,** cut off, extirpated, and thus destroyed and forgotten, **from among his family because he hath no son? Give unto us, therefore, a possession among the brethren of our father.** Their petition was that in such circumstances as those in which they found themselves the female heirs could represent and take the place of male. Without being conscious of it, they really demanded an elevation of woman in her social dignity. In the case of the marriage of a daughter into a different tribe the name of her father would have died out among the people, whereas, if their petition would be granted, a girl could marry a man who would enter upon her possession, the children of such a union preserving the name and continuing the inheritance of the grandfather on the maternal side. V. 5. **And Moses brought their cause before the Lord,** for it was a case which required divine adjustment. V. 6. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 7. **The daughters of Zelophehad speak right,** the justice of their plea was recognized by the Lord; **thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father,** that which he would have received, had he remained alive, **to pass unto them.** To this was afterwards added a precept concerning the marriage of such a woman within her own tribe, chap. 36, 8. V. 8. **And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter** (or daughters). V. 9. **And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.** V. 10. **And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.** V. 11. **And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it,** the order thus being: son, daughter, brothers, uncles, nearest relative beyond this circle; **and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the Lord commanded Moses.** Instances of the application of this law are found chap. 32, 41; Deut. 3, 14; 1 Chron. 2, 21. 22; Ezra 2, 61; Neh. 7, 63. Note that these women were striking examples of faith, for they firmly believed that the land of Canaan would be inherited by Israel and made arrangements accordingly.

MOSES INFORMED OF HIS END. — V. 12. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this Mount Abarim,** the range which runs parallel to the Jordan and the Dead Sea, the highest point of which, in that section which bore the name Pisgah, was Mount Nebo, from which Moses later viewed the Land of Promise, Deut. 32, 48—52, **and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel.** This announcement was made at this time in order to remind Moses that his career was near its close and that he must prepare both himself and the people whom he had led thus far for his death, providing for their welfare and consecrating his successor. V. 13. **And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron, thy brother, was gathered,** chap. 20, 24. 28. V. 14. **For ye rebelled against My commandment in the Desert of Zin, in the strife of the**

congregation, when the congregation was dissatisfied and murmured against the Lord, chap. 20, 12. 13, **to sanctify Me at the water before their eyes; that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin.** There it was that Moses, provoked in his spirit, had spoken unadvisedly with his lips, Ps. 106, 33. V. 15. **And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying,** v. 16. **Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh,** who gives life and breath to all beings, **set a man over the congregation,** for the definite order of Jehovah would prevent dissatisfaction with the choice of the person, v. 17. **which may go out before them, and which may go in before them,** both as they set forth from a camp and as they pitched in a new place, in all the marches and journeys which they still had before them, **and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.** Till the last the love of Moses prompted him to regard the children of Israel with tender concern, such as every pastor feels concerning the people entrusted to his spiritual care.

JOSHUA APPOINTED LEADER OF THE PEOPLE. V. 18. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit,** he had shown the intelligence, the executive ability, and the spirituality needed for the difficult office, **and lay thine hand upon him;** v. 19. **and set him before Eleazar, the priest, and before all the congregation, in a form of ordination or consecration for his work; and give him a charge in their sight,** formally transmit the office of leader to him. V. 20. **And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him,** as much as Joshua needed for the effective administration of his leadership, **that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient,** giving him the same deference in word and deed which they had owed and usually showed to Moses. V. 21. **And he shall stand before Eleazar, the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord;** he was dependent upon the counsel of the high priest as given by means of the mysterious Urim, for he had no direct access to God, as Moses had, Ex. 28, 30. **At his word,** in accordance with the utterance which the high priest would make by means of the Urim and Thummim entrusted to him, **shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.** V. 22. **And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar, the priest, and before all the congregation,** Deut. 31, 7. 8; v. 23. **and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.** That was the formal installation and induction of Joshua into the duties of his high office. Although we have no command of God to that effect, we also install the officers of the church with due solemnity, in order to remind them of the great responsibility resting upon them.

CHAPTER 28.

Regular and Festival Sacrifices.

THE CONTINUAL AND THE SABBATH OFFERINGS. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Command the children of Israel and say unto them, My offering,** the special gift whereby the fellowship between God and the people was to be maintained, **and My bread for My sacrifices made by fire** (for the food of the sacrifices was devoted to the Lord and by Him given to the priests) **for a sweet savor unto Me shall ye observe to offer unto Me in their due season.** Cp. Lev. 1, 2; 3, 11; 23, 2. 4. V. 3. **And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord: two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering,** one which should be made regularly and always. V. 4. **The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even,** literally, "between the evenings," as the Jews understood it, between noon and sunset, although the reference is really to twilight; v. 5. **and a tenth part of an ephah of flour** (about two and one-half quarts) **for a meat-offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin** (about a quart) **of beaten oil,** not the cheaper grade, that was produced in the oil-presses. V. 6. **It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord.** V. 7. **And the drink-offering thereof,** the libation which was poured out at the time the sacrifice was offered, **shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb; in the Holy Place shalt thou cause the strong wine,** for the wine is here called strong, intoxicating liquor, because it was used unmixed with water, **to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.** V. 8. **And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even,** "between the evenings"; **as the meat-offering of the morning and as the drink-offering thereof thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord,** pleasant in His nostrils and the accompanying prayer therefore acceptable to Him, Ps. 141, 2. Cp. Ex. 29, 38—44. V. 9. **And on the Sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot,** without bodily blemish of

any kind, and two-tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof. V. 10. This is the burnt offering of every Sabbath beside the continual burnt offering, that is, in addition to the regular daily offering, and his drink-offering. Cp. chap. 15, 3—16.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE NEW MOON. — V. 11. And in the beginnings of your months, on the days of the new moon, ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord: two young bullocks and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; v. 12. and three-tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering (between seven and one half and eight quarts), mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two-tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; v. 13. and a several tenth deal of flour, that is, so much for each animal, mingled with oil for a meat-offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering of a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. The amount of flour and oil was proportional to the size of the animal offered. V. 14. And their drink-offerings shall be half an hin of wine (a hin being about a quart) unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb; this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. V. 15. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering unto the Lord shall be offered beside (in addition to) the continual burnt offering and his drink-offering. Cp. chap. 15, 4—12.

THE SACRIFICES OF THE PASSOVER AND OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. — V. 16. And in the fourteenth day of the first month, the month Abib or Nisan, with which the church-year of the Jews began, is the Passover of the Lord. Ex. 12, 6. 18; Lev. 23, 5. V. 17. And in the fifteenth day of this month, and most intimately connected with the Passover, is the feast, as the seven days of unleavened bread are here simply called, Lev. 23, 6; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. V. 18. In the first day shall be an holy convocation, a solemn assembly in the Sanctuary, for the purpose of worship. Ye shall do no servile work therein, as on the Sabbath, Lev. 23, 7; v. 19. but ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the Lord: two young bullocks and one ram and seven lambs of the first year, as on the new moon; they shall be unto you without blemish. V. 20. And their meat-offering, which must invariably accompany the bloody sacrifice, shall be of flour mingled with oil; three-tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock and two-tenth deals for a ram; v. 21. a several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb throughout the seven lambs, v. 22. and one goat for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you. V. 23. Ye shall offer these beside, in addition to, the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. V. 24. After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the same kind and amount of sacrifices for each individual day, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, food devoted to the Lord, of a sweet savor unto the Lord; it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink-offering. V. 25. And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation, as on the first; ye shall do no servile work. Cp. Ex. 12, 15—20; Lev. 23, 6—8.

THE SACRIFICES OF PENTECOST. — V. 26. Also in the day of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering, of the flour of the new harvest, unto the Lord, after your weeks be out, the seven weeks after the sixteenth of Nisan, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; v. 27. but ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord: two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year, as on the other festivals; v. 28. and their meat-offering of flour mingled with oil, three-tenth deals unto one bullock, two-tenth deals unto one ram, v. 29. a several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs; v. 30. and one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you, for that was the purpose of the sin-offering. V. 31. Ye shall offer them beside (in addition to) the continual burnt offering and his meat-offering (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink-offerings. These sacrifices were made in addition to the characteristic offering of the day, that of the two wave-loaves prepared from the flour of the new harvest, Lev. 23, 18. The directions of the Lord were very detailed and explicit, for He wanted these ordinances observed with great exactness, since His honor was thereby exalted.

CHAPTER 29.

The Sacrifices of the Other Festivals.

OF THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS. — V. 1. And in the seventh month, the month Tishri, in the fall, on the first day of the month, the new moon which introduced the civil year, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. Cp. chap. 10, 2—10; Lev. 23, 23—25. V. 2. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord: one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish; v. 3. and their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three-tenth deals

for a bullock, and two-tenth deals for a ram, v. 4. and one-tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs; v. 5. and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you; v. 6. beside the burnt offering of the month, which had to be brought on the day of the new moon in each month, and his meat-offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, according unto their manner, a threefold sacrifice thus being made on the new month of the month Tishri, for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord.

On the Day of Atonement. — V. 7. And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month, on the great Day of Atonement, an holy convocation, for this was the most solemn day in the entire year, a day of deep humiliation and fasting: and ye shall afflict your souls. Ye shall not do any work therein, v. 8. but ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savor: one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish; v. 9. and their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three-tenth deals to a bullock, and two-tenth deals to one ram, v. 10. a several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs; v. 11. one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; beside the sin-offering of atonement, the special yearly sacrifice, Lev. 16, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat-offering of it, and their drink-offerings, as they were brought daily. Cp. Lev. 23, 26—32.

Of the Feast of Tabernacles. — V. 12. And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when the festival of thanksgiving for the entire harvest was celebrated, ye shall have an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days; v. 13. and ye shall offer a burnt offering, on the first day, in addition to the regular daily sacrifices, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord: thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish; v. 14. and their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three-tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two-tenth deals to each ram of the two rams, v. 15. and a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs; v. 16. and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. V. 17. And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot; v. 18. and their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 19. and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt offering, and the meat-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings. V. 20. And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; v. 21. and their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 22. and one goat for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. V. 23. And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; v. 24. their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 25. and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. V. 26. And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot; v. 27. and their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 28. and one goat for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. V. 29. And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; v. 30. and their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 31. and one goat for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. V. 32. And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; v. 33. and their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 34. and one goat for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. V. 35. On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly, Lev. 23, 36. Ye shall do no servile work therein, v. 36. but ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish; v. 37. their meat-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; v. 38. and one goat for a sin-offering; beside the continual burnt offer-

ing, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. The special sacrifices of this festival, which stamped it as a feast of the greatest joy, thus consisted in double the number of rams and lambs for each of the seven days, and in a total of seventy bullocks, the number being distributed to begin with thirteen and to end with seven. All this set the Festival of Tabernacles apart in the year as one on which the hearts of the people were filled with the greatest joy and gratitude, just as all the other ceremonies expressed the same thought, Lev. 23, 34—36. 39—43. The eighth day, as the conclusion of the festival cycle, was placed on a level with the other festivals. V. 39. **These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, at the times which were set apart for that purpose by Him, beside your vows, and your free-will offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings.** Cp. Lev. 23, 37. 38. V. 40. **And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the Lord commanded Moses.** Although the festivals of the New Testament are not celebrated by God's express command, it pleases Him nevertheless that we set aside days for solemn assemblies, to extol the great deeds of God and to praise His wisdom and mercy.

CHAPTER 30.

Regulations Concerning Vows.

THE OBLIGATION OF VOWS. — V. 1. **And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes,** to whom the regulation of affairs regarding families was entrusted, **concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded:** V. 2. **If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond,** both the vows to perform and the vows to abstain being included in the precept, **he shall not break his word** and thus profane his solemn utterance, Ps. 55, 20, **he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth,** for the promise, supported with an oath, has called upon God as a witness, and therefore its fulfilment is a sacred obligation. Far better not to make a promise than to do so lightly and afterward not keep one's word, Deut. 23, 21. 22. The purpose of this regulation, which looked forward to the time of Israel's living in Canaan, was to prevent frivolous vowing and foolish promising, a practise which to this day tends to loosen the bonds of obligation which men ought to feel in their intercourse with one another.

REGARDING VOWS OF PERSONS IN DEPENDENT POSITIONS. — V. 3. **If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth,** and thus bound under the Fourth Commandment in its full range and compass, v. 4. **and her father hear her vow and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her,** not object or interfere, **then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand,** for her father's silence would be construed as equivalent to consent. V. 5. **But if her father disallow her,** prohibit the keeping of the vow, **in the day that he heareth, not any of her vows or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul,** whether they included the performance of, or the abstinence from, anything, **shall stand; and the Lord shall forgive her because her father disallowed her.** Obedience to her father was to be placed higher than any self-imagined act of worship. V. 6. **And if she had (at all) an husband when she vowed, or uttered aught out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul,** v. 7. **and her husband,** toward whom she was in a state of dependence, since he, from the time of betrothal, was the head of the family or house, **heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it, then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.** V. 8. **But if her husband disallowed her,** if he vetoed the promise which she brought along with her into marriage, **on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect; and the Lord shall forgive her.** In this case the jurisdiction of the husband was equal to that of the father before the woman's marriage. V. 9. **But every vow of a widow and of her that is divorced,** forsaken or rejected by her husband, **wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her;** in either case the woman was not restricted by any male authority or household government. V. 10. **And if she vowed in her husband's house or bound her soul by a bond with an oath,** v. 11. **and her husband heard it and held his peace at her and disallowed her not, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.** V. 12. **But if her husband hath utterly made them void,** frustrated them, made them of none effect, **on the day he heard them,** namely, by his refusal to sanction them, **then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the bond of her soul,** no matter what promise it may have been, **shall not stand; her husband hath made them void; and the Lord**

shall forgive her. V. 13. Every vow and every binding oath to afflict the soul, to burden the soul with the obligation of fulfilling the provisions of the promise, **her husband may establish it, by his consent, or her husband may make it void,** by his disapproval. **V. 14. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day,** although he knows of the vow, **then he establisheth all her vows or all her bonds which are upon her; he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them,** for his silence is equivalent to consent. **V. 15. But if he shall anyways make them void after that he hath heard them,** tries to nullify them after a period of silent consent, **then he shall bear her iniquity,** namely, the guilt which his wife would have loaded upon herself, had she frivolously broken her vow. **V. 16. These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses,** concerning the relations **between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.** "How carefully the divine law consults the good order of families, and preserves the power of superior relations and the duty and reverence of inferiors! Rather than break these bonds, God Himself would quit His right and release the obligation of a solemn vow." (Henry.)

CHAPTER 31.

The Campaign against Midian.

THE OVERTHROW OF MIDIAN. — **V. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 2. Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites,** by undertaking a formal campaign of revenge against them, as commanded chap. 25, 16—18. **Afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people,** as had been revealed to him chap. 27, 13. **V. 3. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war,** prepare everything for a campaign, mobilize an army, **and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian,** carry out the revenge of Jehovah upon Midian, execute His divine judicial sentence upon the entire nation. **V. 4. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war,** a total of twelve thousand armed men. **V. 5. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel,** for so the subdivisions of the tribes were called, chap. 1, 16, **a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. V. 6. And Moses sent them to the war,** as a holy army under the direction of Jehovah, and very likely with Joshua as their commander, **a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the priest,** who had distinguished himself in his zeal for the Lord, **to the war with the holy instruments,** either the priestly garments or some of the consecrated vessels, **and the trumpets to blow in his hand,** for that was one of the objects of the silver trumpets, to call the army to battle, chap. 10, 9. **V. 7. And they warred against the Midianites,** whom they presumably took unawares, **as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males,** since it was a war of revenge, of extermination. **V. 8. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian; Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword,** because it had been he who had given the devilish advice to the Midianites in the matter of seducing the children of Israel and causing them to commit idolatry and whoredom. **V. 9. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives and their little ones,** the small children of both sexes, **and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. V. 10. And they burned all their cities,** the fortified towns, **wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles,** the unfortified hamlets or encampments, **with fire. V. 11. And they took all the spoil and all the prey,** all the plunder both in treasures and in animals, **both of men and of beasts. V. 12. And they brought the captives and the prey and the spoil unto Moses and Eleazar, the (high) priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the Plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.** Note that the punishment of the Lord is sure to strike those who seduce His people, even though He, so far as we know, no longer delegates any special nation to carry out His will in this manner.

THE MANNER OF DEALING WITH THE CAPTIVES. — **V. 13. And Moses and Eleazar, the priest, and all the princes of the congregation went forth to meet them without the camp,** full of eagerness to see the evidence of God's avenging justice. **V. 14. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds which came from the battle. V. 15. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?** It was a decided expression of disapproval at this course of action. **V. 16. Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord,** they had given the Israelites occasion to become unfaithful to Jehovah, **in the matter of Peor,** in the immoral service of this idol, chap. 25, **and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. V. 17. Now,**

therefore, kill every male among the little ones, to prevent the reestablishment of the nation, **and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him,** in carnal intercourse, for there was the danger that any one of these women may have been engaged in the shameless practises connected with the service of Peor and that the children of Israel would thus be contaminated by these women. V. 18. **But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him keep alive for yourselves,** as slaves or handmaids, for marriage with such was not forbidden. The great God is terrible in His judgments, a fact which should teach us to fear His wrath and not act contrary to His commandments.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE ARMY. — V. 19. **And do ye abide without the camp seven days,** because they had touched the bodies of slain people and must be purified, chap. 19, 11; **whosoever hath killed any person and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day and on the seventh day,** chap. 19, 9. V. 20. **And purify all your raiment, and all that is made of skins,** the vessels and the coverings made of skins, **and all work of goats' hair,** garments woven out of this hair, **and all things made of wood.** Cp. chap. 19. V. 21. **And Eleazar, the priest, said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses,** a further extension and application of the precepts of purification of chapter 19; v. 22. **only the gold and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,** v. 23. **everything that may abide the fire,** all metals that could withstand the power of the fire as they were placed in it for purposes of purification, **ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean; nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation,** in addition to the outward cleansing by fire, for the Levitical cleansing was an essential part of the ceremony; **and all that abideth not the fire,** such as wood, cloth, and skins, **ye shall make go through the water.** V. 24. **And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day,** as was usually done in the ceremony of purification, **and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.** To this day God can bear no uncleanness, no sinfulness, and He is very earnestly concerned lest the believers become contaminated by contact with the world.

THE DIVISION OF THE SPOILS. — V. 25. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 26. **Take the sum of the prey that was taken,** of everything that was captured in this campaign, **both of man and of beast, thou and Eleazar, the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation,** the heads of the fathers' houses, Ex. 6, 14; v. 27. **and divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them,** who assumed the offensive, made the attack, **who went out to battle, and between all the congregation.** The army received half the spoil, as having been actively engaged in the arduous campaign, but the congregation was also fairly entitled to its share, a rule which was observed also in later times, Josh. 22, 8; 1 Sam. 30, 24. V. 28. **And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons,** the female captives, **and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep,** the levy thus being one-fifth of one per cent.; v. 29. **take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar, the priest, for an heave-offering of the Lord.** V. 30. **And of the children of Israel's half,** of the portion which had been allotted to the congregation that had remained in camp, **thou shalt take one portion of fifty,** or two per cent., **of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the Tabernacle of the Lord.** This special order was intended for only this one case, and was not to be a precedent. V. 31. **And Moses and Eleazar, the priest, did as the Lord commanded Moses.** V. 32. **And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught,** after deducting the persons that were slain by the command of God, and the animals that were consumed during the return to camp, **was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep** (675,000), v. 33. **and threescore and twelve thousand beeves** (72,000), v. 34. **and threescore and one thousand asses** (61,000), v. 35. **and thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him.** V. 36. **And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep** (337,500); v. 37. **and the Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen** (675). V. 38. **And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and twelve** (72). V. 39. **And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred; of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and one** (61). V. 40. **And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons.** V. 41. **And Moses gave the tribute which was the Lord's heave-offering unto Eleazar, the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses,** undoubtedly for their maintenance, the girls becoming their slaves, and the other property being theirs to dispose of as they saw fit. V. 42. **And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred,** v. 43. **(now the half that pertained unto the congregation was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand**

and five hundred sheep, v. 44. **and thirty and six thousand beeves,** v. 45. **and thirty thousand asses and five hundred,** v. 46. **and sixteen thousand persons;)** v. 47. **even of the children of Israel's half Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the Tabernacle of the Lord,** observing all the precepts which pertained to the ministry, as it was entrusted to them, **as the Lord commanded Moses.** The maintenance of the Old Testament Church was a duty commanded by God and prescribed by Him in detail; that of the New Testament Church is a privilege regulated by our love for the cause of the Lord, surely the greatest inducement to make us willing in His service.

The Gifts Consecrated to the Lord. — V. 48. **And the officers which were over thousands of the host, (namely,) the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses;** v. 49. **and they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us.** "This is one of the features of this narrative which shows that we are dealing here with the execution of a divine sentence. It implies an extraordinary divine protection, which is in accordance with the view that they were in a peculiar sense the Lord's instruments." (Gosman.) V. 50. **We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten, of the individual plunder which they had made, of jewels of gold, chains, armbands, and bracelets,** seal-rings, **rings,** such as were fastened in the noses, **earrings, and tablets,** small golden spheres which were used for personal adornment, **to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord,** for the blessing of their safe return, since they felt that they were not worthy of such divine goodness. V. 51. **And Moses and Eleazar, the priest, took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels,** gold that had been fashioned into jewelry. V. 52. **And all the gold of the offering that they offered up, to the Lord, of the captains of thousands and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels** (16,750), or more than $160,000, not too large a sum, by any means; for the nomadic tribes were rich in jewelry as well as in herds and flocks. V. 53. **(For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.)** V. 54. **And Moses and Eleazar, the priest, took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** into the treasury of the Sanctuary, **for a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord.** It pleases the Lord, even now, if believers, for special manifestations of God's goodness and mercy, show their appreciation in special gifts of gratitude, for the work of the Lord.

CHAPTER 32.

The Division of the Country East of Jordan.

The Petition of the Reubenites and Gadites. — V. 1. **Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle,** having apparently gained great wealth in this respect by the recent conquests of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan; **and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle,** for they had become acquainted with this great country east of the Jordan on their recent campaigns, v. 2. **the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar, the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,** v. 3. **Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,** v. 4. **even the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, a very rich and fertile country, especially for purposes of stock-raising, and thy servants have cattle;** v. 5. **wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.** Even if this request was made in consequence of the supposition that the other tribes would be fully able to conquer the land west of the Jordan, the real Canaan, it was an evidence of selfishness on the part of these two tribes and showed that they did not feel the bond of unity which held them together with the other tribes. It seems that at this time the two tribes did not even have the intention of aiding their brethren in gaining possession of the Land of Promise. V. 6. **And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?** To think of enjoying peace, security, and plenty while the other tribes were still engaged in warfare did not give evidence of much brotherly feeling. V. 7. **And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel,** make their heart heavy with apprehension and fear, **from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?** For this effect their action was likely to have, to turn or hold away the hearts of the people, to make them unwilling, to draw them away from the leadership of God. V. 8. **Thus did your fathers,** the spies,

when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. V. 9. For when they went up into the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, turned it away from the Lord by filling it with fear, that they should not go into the Land which the Lord had given them. Cp. chap. 13. V. 10. And the Lord's anger was kindled the same time, and He sware, saying, v. 11. Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, they had not done their full duty in following the Lord; v. 12. save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, and Joshua, the son of Nun; for they have wholly followed the Lord. V. 13. And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, driving them about, causing them to wander back and forth aimlessly, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed. V. 14. And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, a brood carrying on the tradition of your fathers, to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel. V. 15. For if ye turn away from after Him, He will yet again leave them in the wilderness, that would be the consequence of their refusal to take part in the conquest of Canaan proper, and ye shall destroy all this people, the entire nation would suffer as a result of their wilfulness. V. 16. And they came near unto him, to show that they had a good conscience, and that they were perfectly willing to amend their first thoughtless and selfish proposition, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones, rebuild and fortify the towns for their wives and children; v. 17. but we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, they would arm themselves in haste and act as a vanguard of champions before the army of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place, until every tribe has secured its possession; and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land, for the latter had not been utterly uprooted and annihilated, as had the Midianites. V. 18. We will not return unto our houses until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. V. 19. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan or forward, because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward, toward sun-rising. These two tribes, therefore, in a manner of speaking, would not receive a clear title to the land for which they asked until they had fulfilled their promise. That is the rule in the kingdom of God: first war and battle, then the inheritance. He who will not battle need expect no inheritance.

THE PETITION GRANTED WITH THE PROPOSED CONDITION. — V. 20. And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, v. 21. and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord, until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him, the matter was to be performed in good faith, in solemn earnestness, as before the face of Jehovah, with His eyes resting upon them, v. 22. and the land be subdued before the Lord, then, afterward, ye shall return and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel, since they would then have fulfilled all the obligations resting upon them as members of the Lord's people; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. V. 23. But if ye will not do so, refusing to fulfil the duty which lay before them so plainly, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out, its punishment would surely strike them. V. 24. Build you cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth, they should keep the promise which they had made of their own free will. V. 25. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth. V. 26. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead; v. 27. but thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the Lord to battle, as my lord saith. V. 28. So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar, the priest, and Joshua, the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, since Moses knew that he himself would not live to see the accomplishment of the agreement; v. 29. and Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the Lord, who still accompanied the host, and the land shall be subdued before you, then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession, which they were now holding only in a temporary and tentative manner, subject to the fulfilment of their promise; v. 30. but if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. The text seems to imply that the two tribes would lose their identity in that case, their status as two separate and distinct tribes, their members being distributed among the other tribes of Israel. V. 31. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do, thus declaring their willingness to accept the terms

as stated. V. 32. **We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side of Jordan may be ours,** for the possession of it was actually dependent upon their fulfilling the condition. V. 33. **And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben and unto half the tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joseph,** this tribe thus being recognized as having equal claims with the other two, **the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts** (boundaries), **even the cities of the country round about,** the entire country with its cities and the cultivated land in the neighborhood of the cities. V. 34. **And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,** v. 35. **and Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,** v. 36. **and Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities; and folds,** walled corals, **for sheep.** V. 37. **And the children of Reuben built Heshbon,** the city which had been the capital of Sihon, **and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,** v. 38. **and Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah; and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.** Some of these cities have been located more or less exactly, while the location of others is altogether a matter of conjecture; but they were all in the territory east of the Jordan. V. 39. **And the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, went to Gilead,** that is, they had gone there, this fact causing them to be included in this grant, **and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it.** V. 40. **And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir, the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.** V. 41. **And Jair, the son of Manasseh, went,** had gone, **and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-jair.** V. 42. **And Nobah went,** had gone, **and took Kenath and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.** Cp. Deut. 3, 4. 14; 1 Chron. 2, 22. 23, where we learn that Jair was the leader in these expeditions, that he himself took twenty-three cities, and that the total number of towns with their suburbs taken in the campaign was sixty. For the people of God the motto holds true: A common warfare and peril, a common triumph and inheritance.

CHAPTER 33.

A List of the Wilderness Camps.

From Egypt to the Plains of Moab. — V. 1. **These are the journeys of the children of Israel which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.** V. 2. **And Moses wrote their goings out,** their removals or decampments, **according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord; and these are their journeys according to their goings out.** Moses prepared this list at the command of Jehovah, "undoubtedly that it might be a monument of the great guidance of Jehovah and of His covenant faithfulness, which had now brought the people to the border of Canaan. It is a retrospect of the journey through the wilderness, in which richest memories must attach to many stations, inspiring humiliation and praise." V. 3. **And they departed from Rameses,** apparently the chief city of the district which they inhabited in Egypt and the natural place of assembling for the exodus from Egypt, Ex. 12, 37, **in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand,** under the almighty guidance of Jehovah, **in the sight of all the Egyptians.** V. 4. **For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them,** and therefore did not lift a hand to hinder the departure of the Israelites; **upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments,** chiefly in showing their powerlessness at this critical point. V. 5. **And the children of Israel departed from Rameses,** the name always indicating the station from which the next march began, not the entire encampment, **and pitched in Succoth,** near the lakes on the eastern boundary of Egypt. V. 6. **And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness,** Ex. 13, 20. V. 7. **And they removed from Etham, and turned again,** that is, they turned back, in a southwesterly direction, **unto Pihahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon,** Ex. 14, 2; **and they pitched before Migdol.** V. 8. **And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness,** namely, the Wilderness of Shur, Ex. 15, 22, **and went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham,** the more general name for the desertlike country along the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez, **and pitched in Marah,** Ex. 15, 23. V. 9. **And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim,** Ex. 15, 27; **and in Elim were twelve fountains of water and threescore and ten palm-trees; and they pitched there.** V. 10. **And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea,** probably because the road near the Sea offered a more gradual ascent into the higher country to the east. V. 11. **And they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the Wilderness of Sin,** Ex. 16, 1.

V. 12. **And they took their journey out of the Wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah.** V. 13. **And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush,** these two stations not being expressly named in the historical account. V. 14. **And they removed from Alush, and encamped in Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink,** Ex. 17, 1. V. 15. **And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the Wilderness of Sinai,** Ex. 19, 1. 2. V. 16. **And they removed from the Desert of Sinai,** where they had been almost a year, **and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah,** in the Wilderness of Paran, chap. 10, 12; 11, 34. V. 17. **And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah** (graves of lust), **and encamped at Hazeroth,** chap. 11, 35. V. 18. **And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah,** also known as Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Paran, at its northern border, chap. 12, 16. The stations named in the next seventeen verses are those of the wilderness journey of the next thirty-eight years. V. 19. **And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez.** V. 20. **And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.** V. 21. **And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah.** V. 22. **And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah.** V. 23. **And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in Mount Shapher.** V. 24. **And they removed from Mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.** V. 25. **And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.** V. 26. **And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath.** V. 27. **And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah.** V. 28. **And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah.** V. 29. **And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah.** V. 30. **And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.** V. 31. **And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan.** V. 32. **And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad.** V. 33. **And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah.** V. 34. **And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.** V. 35. **And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber,** at the northern extremity of the Elanitic Gulf. V. 36. **And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the Wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh,** thus coming back to that section of the Wilderness of Paran which they had left some thirty-seven years before. V. 37. **And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in Mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.** V. 38. **And Aaron, the priest, went up into Mount Hor at the commandment of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt,** chap. 20, 22—29, **in the first day of the fifth month.** V. 39. **And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in Mount Hor.** V. 40. **And King Arad, the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel,** chap. 21, 1—3. V. 41. **And they departed from Mount Hor,** chap. 21, 4, **and pitched in Zalmonah.** V. 42. **And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon.** V. 43. **And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth,** the three last-named probably being the same stations as those mentioned in vv. 33—35. V. 44. **And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab,** chap. 21, 11. They had thus marched around the entire land of Edom. V. 45. **And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad,** chap. 32, 34. V. 46. **And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim.** V. 47. **And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo,** chap. 21, 20. V. 48. **And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the Plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho,** where they were encamped at this time. V. 49. **And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the Plains of Moab,** these being the extreme limits of their encampment. Each name in this list recalled some act of God's goodness and mercy to the minds of the Israelites, even as Christians associate the names of certain places where they have lived with some special manifestation of God's kindness.

THE COMMAND TO EXTERMINATE THE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN. — V. 50. **And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho, saying,** v. 51. **Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan,** an event whose happening is here assumed as most certain to take place, v. 52. **then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures,** idols hewn out of stone, **and destroy all their molten images,** idols cast from metals, **and quite pluck down all their high places,** the altars and places of worship on hills, Lev. 26, 30; v. 53. **and ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land,** namely, by exterminating them, **and dwell therein; for I have given you the land to possess it.** V. 54. **And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families,** every generation receiving that part of the country for a home to which the lot drawn from the urn directed its members; **and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance; every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according**

to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. Cp. chap. 26, 53—55. V. 55. **But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, namely, by uprooting them entirely, then it shall come to pass that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, causing them just as sharp pains as the sharpest thorns would to the most delicate parts of the human body, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell,** cause them oppression and tribulation. V. 56. **Moreover, it shall come to pass that I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them,** namely, drive them out of the land and destroy them. This warning was repeated by Joshua, Josh. 23, 13, and was fulfilled in the history of both Israel and Judah. It is the will of God to this day that Christians, although living in the midst of the godless children of the world, should keep themselves altogether uncontaminated of the world.

CHAPTER 34.

Concerning the Division of Canaan.

THE BOUNDARIES OF CANAAN. — V. 1. **And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,** v. 2. **Command the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan, (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts** [boundaries] **thereof,** that is, the land of your inheritance, the Land of Promise, shall have the following boundaries,) v. 3. **then your south quarter,** the general southern boundary, **shall be from the Wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom,** in the southeastern corner, **and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the Salt Sea eastward,** the extreme southeastern corner of the Dead Sea; v. 4. **and your border shall turn from the south,** that is, bend southwards in Israel's favor, **to the ascent of Akrabbim,** the mountains on the northeastern boundary of Edom, **and pass on to Zin,** along the border of the desert; **and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea,** to include this station, **and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon,** farther toward the east; v. 5. **and the border shall fetch a compass** (turn toward) **from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea,** for the brook of Egypt would form the boundary on the southwest, 1 Kings 8, 65; 2 Kings 24, 7. V. 6. **And as for the western border, ye shall even have the Great Sea,** the Mediterranean Sea, **for a border; this shall be your west border.** V. 7. **And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you Mount Hor;** this mountain, probably in the Anti-Lebanon range, was to determine the extent of the country toward the north. V. 8. **From Mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath,** on the boundary of the kingdom of that name, in the valley of the Orontes, 2 Kings 14, 25; **and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad,** toward the northeast; v. 9. **and the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan,** a village noted for its abundant springs, between Palmyra and Damascus; **this shall be your north border.** V. 10. **And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham;** v. 11. **and the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain,** in the borders of the land of Hamath, 2 Kings 23, 33; **and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side,** literally, "the shoulder," **of the Sea of Chinnereth,** later called the Sea of Galilee, **eastward,** thus striking this body of water on the northeastern shore; v. 12. **and the border,** skirting the lake on the eastern side, **shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the Salt Sea,** the Dead Sea, both the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan thus being included within the boundary of Canaan proper. **This shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about.** "This land of Canaan was still now to be distributed by lot, as the land of the inheritance in the narrower and stricter sense. Still, the inheritance of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, the east Jordan region, was included. For here it treats specially of that part of the inheritance which was yet to be conquered and distributed." (Lange.) V. 13. **And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the Lord commanded to give unto the nine tribes and to the half tribe;** v. 14. **for the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers have received their inheritance,** to be definitely assigned to them after they had fulfilled the condition which they had accepted, chap. 32, 28—33, **and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance.** V. 15. **The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan, near Jericho eastward, toward the sun-rising,** this expression being used to denote the entire kingdom of the Amorites, as well as Bashan and Gilead. Every new message of the Lord made the possession of the land of Canaan surer in the minds of the people, and was intended to inspire them with greater eagerness to possess their inheritance.

THE PRINCES IN CHARGE OF THE DIVISION. — **V. 16. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 17. These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you,** the men in charge of the lot-casting which should determine the location of each individual tribe: **Eleazar, the priest, and Joshua, the son of Nun. V. 18. And ye shall take one prince of every tribe to divide the land by inheritance. V. 19. And the names of the men are these: Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. V. 20. And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel, the son of Ammihud. V. 21. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad, the son of Chislon. V. 22. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki, the son of Jogli. V. 23. The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel, the son of Ephod. V. 24. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel, the son of Shiphtan. V. 25. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan, the son of Parnach. V. 26. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel, the son of Azzan. V. 27. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud, the son of Shelomi. V. 28. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel, the son of Ammihud. V. 29. These are they whom the Lord commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.** Of these princes only Caleb is mentioned elsewhere. The list of tribes in the order named corresponds, with some exceptions, to the situation of the territory which the tribes received in Canaan, reckoning from the south to the north. It should be remembered also here that the position of the several inheritances was determined by lot; but their dimensions were proportioned to the numerical size of the tribes to which they fell, the largest tribe getting the most territory. The care of the covenant God for the people whom He had chosen appears throughout.

CHAPTER 35.

The Cities of the Levites and the Cities of Refuge.

THE CITIES OF THE LEVITES. — **V. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho, saying, v. 2. Command the children of Israel that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in,** for the Levites, as a tribe, received no special territory in the land of Canaan, chap. 18, 20. 23; **and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs** for the cities round about them, meadows, pasture-land for their herds and flocks, fields which could not be sold, but remained the permanent and inalienable property of the Levites, Lev. 25, 34. This does not hold true of the cities themselves, for in these it was only the houses that were given to the Levites, in regard to which the Lord had provided that they could be redeemed at any time after being sold and should always be returned to the original owners or their heirs in the Year of Jubilee, Lev. 25, 32. 33. **V. 3. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs,** the meadows, the pasture-land, **of them shall be for their cattle and for their goods and for all their beasts. V. 4. And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about,** that is, measuring directly from the city wall in a straight line. **V. 5. And ye shall measure from without the city,** from its wall or boundary, **on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst,** and the place occupied by it should not enter into the calculations; **this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. V. 6. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge,** which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, to the man who unintentionally takes his neighbor's life, **that he may flee thither; and to them ye shall add forty and two cities,** making a total of forty-eight. **V. 7. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities; them shall ye give with their suburbs. V. 8. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel,** selected from the territory apportioned to the tribes; **from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few; every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.** As the plan worked out afterward, Josh. 21, there were ten cities of the Levites in the country east of the Jordan and thirty-eight in Canaan proper. By living in the midst of all the tribes, the Levites were to be an example to the entire nation, continually reminding them of their divine call and of the covenant of Jehovah, so that the fear of the Lord might be maintained in Israel.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE CITIES OF REFUGE. — **V. 9. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, v. 10. Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan, v. 11. then ye shall appoint you**

cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the slayer may flee thither which killeth any person at unawares, by error, inadvertently, without premeditation or malice. V. 12. **And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger** (of blood), **that the manslayer die not until he stand before the congregation in judgment** and be able to clear himself of the charge of malicious murder. V. 13. **And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge.** V. 14. **Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan,** in the territory of the two and one half tribes, **and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge.** V. 15. **These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that every one that killeth any person unawares,** unintentionally, **may flee thither.** These regulations are still further expanded in Deut. 19, 1—13, especially with regard to the avenger of blood, for so the nearest relative of any person to whom an injustice had been done was called. By God's permission such a person was empowered to revenge a wrong, even to the extent of putting a slayer to death, the present precept regulating the custom. There follow regulations concerning the legal process in the case of manslaughter. V. 16. **And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.** V. 17. **And if he smite him with throwing a stone,** with a stone large enough to fill the hand, and therefore presumably heavy enough to cause death, **wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.** V. 18. **Or if he smite him with an hand-weapon of wood,** one whose holding requires the full size of the hand, **wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.** V. 19. **The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.** In these three cases, where a heavy iron instrument, an ax or hammer, a large stone, or a heavy wooden tool or cudgel was used in striking down the neighbor, the evidence that he deliberately took the neighbor's life was considered conclusive from the outset. V. 20. **But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait,** with deliberate intent, **that he die,** v. 21. **or in enmity smite him with his hand that he die, he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer; the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him,** the elders of the city of refuge in that case being obliged to deliver the murderer to the avenger of blood, Deut. 19, 11. 12. V. 22. **But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity,** without a previous quarrel, **or have cast upon him anything without laying of wait,** without malicious intention, v. 23. **or with any stone wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him that he die,** as might happen, for instance, during the building of a house, **and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm,** had absolutely no intention of hurting him, v. 24. **then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments,** according to the regulations as contained in this chapter; v. 25. **and the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood,** save his life by preventing his execution by the hand of the revenger, **and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge,** grant him safe-conduct to this haven of safety, **whither he was fled,** for the trial, of course, took place in his own city; **and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest which was anointed with the holy oil,** the incumbent of the office at the time of the trial. The death of the high priest thus released him from his banishment. V. 26. **But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled,** where he enjoyed the protection of the Levites under the provisions of this law, v. 27. **and the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer, he** (the revenger) **shall not be guilty of blood,** shall not be considered a murderer, v. 28. **because he** (the slayer) **should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession,** to his own inheritance in the midst of his tribe, since his life was now safeguarded by the Law of God. V. 29. **So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings,** these precepts belonged to the ordinances which should remain in power as long as the nation of Israel endured. V. 30. **Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses,** their testimony being needed to convict him; **but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.** Where the life of a person was in jeopardy, the testimony of a single person, no matter how trustworthy he might be otherwise, should not be deemed sufficient for conviction. Cp. Deut. 17, 6; 19, 15. V. 31. **Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death,** he could not save his life by paying a sum of money as ransom; **but he shall be surely put to death.** V. 32. **And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the**

priest; no payment of money should procure for him a release from his banishment. V. 33. **So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are,** by sparing the life of a murderer, due to false sentiment or the acceptance of bribe money; **for blood, it defileth the land,** namely, that shed in wilful murder; **and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein but by the blood of him that shed it,** Gen. 9, 6; only by this expiation is the justice of God satisfied. V. 34. **Defile not, therefore, the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell; for I, the Lord, dwell among the children of Israel,** and every desecration of the land would call forth His avenging justice, Lev. 18, 25. Although this special precept belongs to the Levitical Law of the Old Testament, it would be well for legislative bodies and executives, in our country especially, to lay aside the false sentimentalism which spares the lives of murderers and has proved itself a curse to the nation.

CHAPTER 36.

Of the Inheritance of Daughters.

THE OBJECTION RAISED. — V. 1. **And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spake before Moses and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel,** voicing an objection which had come to them with regard to a recent decision; v. 2. **and they said, The Lord commanded my lord** (Moses) **to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel; and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad, our brother,** that is, of the member of their tribe, **unto his daughters.** V. 3. **And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance,** according to the provision as it now stood, **be taken from the inheritance of our fathers and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.** The consequence, as they saw it, would be that the territory of the several tribes would not remain intact and that a general confusion would result. V. 4. **And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance,** that of Zelophehad's daughters, **be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received,** by the fact of their marriage; **so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.** Until the Year of Jubilee there was always a possibility of a childless marriage or of the sale of the property to members of the tribe of Manasseh; but after the Year of Jubilee the last chance would be gone, and relief would no longer be possible.

THE REGULATION. — V. 5. **And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord,** which he had meanwhile received, **saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.** V. 6. **This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry,** become wives, **to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry,** that was the restriction to which they were bound. Moreover, this was to be a general rule. V. 7. **So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe,** not be transferred by marriages of this kind; **for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers,** to avoid confusion. V. 8. **And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel,** in the form of land or real estate, **shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.** V. 9. **Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.** V. 10. **Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad;** v. 11. **for Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons,** to their cousins, unless the Hebrew term is used in the wider sense. V. 12. **And they were married into the families,** and thus also by marriage became members of the families, **of the sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.** V. 13. **These are the commandments and the judgments,** the ordinances or statutes, **which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the Plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho.** Thus Moses put his signature to the lawgiving of the Plains of Moab, "though without in any way implying that the explanation, further development, and hortatory enforcement of the Law and its statutes and judgments, which follow in Deuteronomy, are not of Mosaic origin." (Keil.)

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

INTRODUCTION.

The name which has been given to this last of the five books of Moses characterizes its contents as "the second giving of the Law," or "the repetition of the Law," since the greater part of the book is devoted to the repetition, explanation, and inculcation of the Law as contained in the preceding books. It is a review of the commandments and statutes which the Lord had given to His people. The book contains the last discourses of Moses, the man of God, addressed to the children of Israel. Before being gathered to his people, as the Lord had said in telling him of his coming death, he once more reminds the children of Israel of all the mercies, ordinances, and promises of God. The time is the eleventh month of the fortieth year after the departure from Egypt; the place is the encampment of Israel on the east side of Jordan, opposite Jericho, in the Plains of Moab. Here the great prophet makes his closing appeal to those whom he had led and formed into a nation, asking them to keep inviolate the covenant of the Lord and to walk in His ways at all times. Moses eagerly desires the happiness of his people. "Oh, that there were such an heart in them that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" Chap. 5, 29. The last three sections of the book, which contain the announcement of the death of Moses, his last blessing, and the narrative of his death, were probably added to Deuteronomy by the inspired author of the Book of Joshua.

"The forty years of wandering are at an end. The children of Israel are in sight of the Promised Land. Moses recognizes the fact that his leadership is about to end, but that the covenant is to abide. A crisis has come in the affairs of the nation, and a review of Israel's history and a restatement of God's laws must be made. A new generation had grown up, which had not heard the original promulgation of the Law at Sinai. A new country was before the nation. This country was devoted to an idolatrous worship of the most seductive kind. On every high hill and in every grove this worship was carried on. An unflinching devotion to God was necessary to resist this alluring worship, which was more to be dreaded than an armed resistance. Moses endeavors to impress his hearers with the advantages of obedience and the disadvantages of disobedience to God's Law." (Sell.)

The book, as indicated above, may be divided into two unequal divisions. In the first division, which contains the farewell addresses of Moses, we have his introductory address, the repetition and inculcation of the Law, and the announcement of blessing and curse. The second division, embracing the last four chapters, contains the account of the farewell of Moses, of his last hymn, blessing, with its Messianic contents, and death.1)

1) *Concordia Bible Class*, Feb., 1919, 28. 29; Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 26.

CHAPTER 1.

A Review of the Journey from Sinai to Kadesh.

The Introduction. — V. 1. **These be the words**, the addresses, **which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness**, in the semiarid steppes, **in the plain over against the Red Sea**, after whose passage they had entered into the wilderness, **between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.** The stations of the desert were just barely behind the children of Israel, and the impression of the wilderness still prevailed. The geographic reference at this point recalls the entire journey and offers a picture of the entire country traversed, as it extended from the Red Sea to the northern boundary of the Wilderness of Paran, and from there to the western boundary of Edom and Moabitis. V. 2. (**There are eleven days' journey from Horeb**, or Sinai, where the Law was given, **by the way of Mount Seir**, along its foothills and leading to its highest elevation, **unto Kadesh-barnea**, and so long it had taken the people upon their first trip.) V. 3. **And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel according unto all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them**, in agreement with all the precepts and ordinances which had been given to him during all the years of the desert journey; v. 4. **after he had slain Sihon, the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth** (and) **in Edrei**, the two names either being those of his capital cities, or Edrei was located in the fertile region of Ashtaroth. It was at this time, when the defeat of the two mightiest kings east of the Jordan served as a guarantee to the children of Israel for the further fulfillment of God's promises, that Moses received

the command to address the children of Israel in the manner recorded in this book. V. 5. **On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab,** for the plains where Israel was encamped were originally a part of Moabitis, **began Moses to declare,** to expound, **this Law, saying,** v. 6. **The Lord, our God, spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount,** namely, from the third month of the first year after the exodus to the twentieth day of the second month of the second year. V. 7. **Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites,** the mountainous country inhabited by the Amorites, a description of the land of Canaan in the narrower sense, **and unto all the places nigh thereunto,** literally, "to all the near neighbors" (for the inhabitants of the entire country are meant), **in the plain,** especially toward the southeast and east, along the Jordan and the Dead Sea, **in the hills,** both of what was later Judea and Galilee, **and in the vale,** the plains toward the Mediterranean Sea, especially that of Sharon, **and in the south,** the semiarid steppes of Southern Judea, **and by the seaside,** the lowlands immediately bordering upon the Mediterranean, **to the land of the Canaanites,** for all these parts were included in the general description of the land, **and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates,** since it was the original intention of the Lord to include all this country within the limits of the Land of Promise. In reality, it was only during the time of David and Solomon that the boundaries of Israel's territory reached from the head of the Elanitic Gulf and the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates. V. 8. **Behold, I have set the land before you,** it was Jehovah's gift to them and its possession therefore should be certain and easy; **go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.** Gen. 22, 16.

THE ASSISTANTS OF MOSES. — V. 9. **And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone.** Moses does not observe the chronological order of events, but selects such as were of importance for his present purpose. It was while the people were encamped at Horeb that Moses arranged for assistants, Ex. 18, 13—26. The seventy elders were appointed at a later date, Num. 11, 14—30. V. 10. **The Lord, your God, hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude,** as the Lord had promised in the prophecy of the covenant, Gen. 15, 5 ff.; 12, 2; 18, 18; 22, 17; 26, 4. And Moses here inserts his own devout wish and prayer, v. 11. **(The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are and bless you as He hath promised you!)** V. 12. **How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance,** for the responsibility for the entire people's welfare rested upon him, **and your burden,** all the business which they had laid upon Moses, which he had assumed as an obligation, **and your strife,** the many difficulties connected with their quarrels and litigations? V. 13. **Take you wise men and understanding,** they were to select these men themselves, since it was necessary to place a great deal of trust in them, **and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.** These rulers were thus characterized by the fear of God, by good common sense in judging particular cases, and were acknowledged as trustworthy by the people themselves, an excellent combination for the purpose. V. 14. **And ye answered me and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do.** V. 15. **So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men and known, and made them heads over you,** formally invested them with the authority needed, **captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.** V. 16. **And I charged your judges,** for as such these men were to act, **at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren,** more in the capacity of mediators than of executives, **and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.** V. 17. **Ye shall not respect persons in judgment,** literally, "look upon, acknowledge, make a distinction between, faces," said of being partial; **but ye shall hear the small as well as the great. Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man,** no matter if he be powerful otherwise; **for the judgment is God's; and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it,** Ex. 18, 22. 26. V. 18. **And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.** The chief judicial authority remained with Moses, under the direct leadership of God. The believers of the New Testament have one infallible rule to guide them at all times, the Word of Scripture.

KADESH-BARNEA AND THE SPIES.—V. 19. **And when we departed from Horeb,** Num. 10, 11, **we went through all that great and terrible wilderness which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites,** during their journey to reach that country, **as the Lord, our God, commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea,** which may be considered as being located in the extreme southern boundary of the Amorite country. V. 20. **And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites,** the range which separated them from Canaan, and which here stands for the entire country, **which the Lord, our God, doth give unto us.** Moses represented the goal as even then attained. V. 21. **Behold, the Lord, thy God, hath set the land before thee,** He had made them a present

of the entire country in advance; **go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.** V. 22. **And ye came near unto me, every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come.** This account supplements that of Num. 13, showing that Moses was in favor of going right ahead with the conquest of the country, and that the Lord had given command to send spies only after the people had suggested this course. V. 23. **And the saying pleased me well; and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe,** Num. 13, 3—16. V. 24. **And they turned, set out, and went up into the mountain, the** mountainous country of Canaan, **and came unto the Valley of Eshcol, and searched it out,** Num. 13, 22—24. V. 25. **And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord, our God, doth give us.** It was in this point, with regard to the fertility of the land, that the report of all the spies had agreed. V. 26. **Notwithstanding ye would not go up,** being influenced by the terror which had taken hold upon the majority of the spies, Num. 13, 31, **but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, your God;** v. 27. **and ye murmured in your tents,** Num. 14, 1—4. for so the rebellion had begun, **and said, Because the Lord hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us.** By addressing the present generation in the words of this accusation, Moses indicated that the same rebellious spirit that actuated their fathers lived also in them. V. 28. **Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.** Num. 13, 28—33. V. 29. **Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them.** Moses had seconded the efforts of Joshua and Caleb. V. 30. **The Lord, your God, which goeth before you, He shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes;** v. 31. **and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord, thy God, bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.** Cp. Ex. 19, 4. They had experienced the merciful kindness of God which took up the faint and perishing, the care which bore them upon His arm and brought them safely through every danger; and they should continue to trust in the almighty power of Jehovah as being able to bring them into the Land of Promise. V. 32. **Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord, your God,** v. 33. **who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.** The entire behavior of the children of Israel at that time had been based upon lack of faith in the Lord, it flowed from unbelief. V. 34. **And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying,** v. 35. **Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land which I sware to give unto your fathers,** v. 36. **save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord,** Num. 14, 22—24. V. 37. **Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes,** namely, at Meribah, an incident which Moses includes at this point for the sake of cumulative effect, **saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither,** Num. 20, 12. This is not inserted in chronological sequence, but in logical connection, and is very effective. V. 38. **But Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither; encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.** Cp. Num. 14, 30; 27, 18. 19. V. 39. **Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil,** having no part in that particular transgression of their parents, **they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it,** Num. 14, 31. V. 40. **But as for you, turn you, away from the inviting richness of the Land of Promise, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea,** Num. 14, 25. V. 41. **Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord, our God, commanded us,** Num. 14, 40. **And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill;** in their presumptuousness they thought it an easy matter to storm the pass on their own account. V. 42. **And the Lord said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies;** their defeat without His assistance was a foregone conclusion. V. 43. **So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and went presumptuously, with proud, defiant insolence, up into the hill.** V. 44. **And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, and had prepared for a possible invasion, came out against you, and chased you as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah,** pursuing them far into Edomitish territory, 1 Chron. 5, 42. 43. V. 45. **And ye returned and wept before the**

Lord, before the Tabernacle; but the Lord would not hearken to your voice nor give ear unto you. That was Jehovah's attitude during the next years, for He refused to change His sentence which condemned all adult Israelites to death in the wilderness. V. 46. **So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.** The exact length of time during which the people remained at this station after the return of the spies is a matter of conjecture only. We believers of the New Testament should remember the many evidences of the goodness and mercy of the Lord, who leads us through the wilderness of this world with such tender love and holds out before us the certainty of the heavenly inheritance. The remembrance of our disobedience in the past should serve to keep us truly humble and cause us to cling to the Lord in the confidence of a firm faith.

CHAPTER 2.

A Review of Events from Kadesh to Jahaz.

FROM KADESH TO THE BROOK ZERED. — V. 1. **Then we turned and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea,** that is, in the direction toward the Red Sea, Num. 14, 25, **as the Lord spake unto me; and we compassed Mount Seir many days,** ever moving around in the neighborhood of this mountain range, in the Wilderness of Paran, down to the Elanitic Gulf. V. 2. **And the Lord spake unto me, saying,** v. 3. **Ye have compassed this mountain long enough,** after they had been journeying back and forth some thirty-seven years; **turn you northward,** back once more to the edge of the Wilderness of Paran. V. 4. **And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast** (boundary) **of your brethren, the children of Esau,** the half-brother of Isaac, **which dwell in Seir,** in the country south of the Dead Sea; **and they shall be afraid of you,** since the fear of the Lord had fallen upon all the nations round about; **take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore;** v. 5. **meddle not with them,** that is, do not attack them; **for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot-breadth; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.** It was for this reason that Israel did not react to the challenge of the king of Edom with an attack, Num. 20, 14—21, when the latter refused them passage through his land. V. 6. **Ye shall buy meat of them for money,** that is, something to eat, food, **that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.** V. 7. **For the Lord, thy God, hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand,** not only in their herds and their flocks, but in whatever industry they found occasion to carry on in the wilderness; **He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness,** and his knowing involved care and protection. **These forty years the Lord, thy God, hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing,** the Lord had supplied everything, Prov. 27, 23; Ps. 1, 6. V. 8. **And when we passed by from our brethren, the children of Esau,** which they did by marching around their country, **which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath,** on the shore of the Elanitic Gulf, **and from Ezion-gaber,** later the harbor of Solomon at the head of this body of water, **we turned,** to the west and north, **and passed by the way of the Wilderness of Moab,** the Plains of Moab being the present end of that journey. V. 9. **And the Lord said unto me, Distress not,** use no hostile attitude toward, do not attack, **the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar,** a city near the boundary of Moab and here representative of the entire country, **unto the children of Lot for a possession,** the Moabites being descendants of Lot, Gen. 19, 37. V. 10. **The Emims dwelt therein in times past,** in the land now occupied by Moab, **a people great, and many, and tall as the Anakims;** v. 11. **which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims.** V. 12. **The Horims,** or Horites, Gen. 14, 6; 36, 20, **also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead,** in the land formerly occupied by the cliff-dwellers; **as Israel did unto the land of his possession,** the country east of the Jordan, **which the Lord gave unto them.** V. 13. **Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered,** the stream which formed the general southern border of Moabitis, Num. 21, 12. **And we went over the brook Zered.** V. 14. **And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea,** after the return of the spies, **until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years, until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host,** Num. 26, 65, **as the Lord sware unto them.** V. 15. **For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed.** The judgment of the Lord was carried out with unrelenting severity. He is a jealous God even to-day, and often strikes down the mockers in fury as a warning to all men.

THE DEFEAT OF SIHON. — V. 16. **So it came to pass, when all the men of war were con-**

sumed and dead from among the people, the punishment of God having struck them according to His word, v. 17. **that the Lord spake unto me, saying,** v. 18. **Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day;** v. 19. **and when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon,** whose territory was chiefly east and northeast of that of the Amorites, **distress them not, nor meddle with them,** assume no hostile attitude nor make a show of attacking them; **for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession,** for the Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Gen. 19, 38. V. 20. **(That also was accounted a land of giants** before its occupation by the children of Ammon; **giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummim,** literally, "a humming, noisy people," possibly the same as the Zusim, Gen. 14, 5, or related to them; v. 21. **a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before them,** the Ammonites, His object being to lead the latter to repentance, to cause them to seek the true God, the tradition of whom was handed down to them from their fathers, **and they succeeded them and dwelt in their stead,** v. 22. **as He did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir when He destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day;** v. 23. **and the Avims, which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah,** in the southwestern corner of Canaan, **the Caphtorim, which came forth out of Caphtor,** and bore the name of their progenitor, Gen. 10, 14, **destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)** This notice having been inserted for the sake of orientation, Moses continues his address proper. V. 24. **Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon,** the southern boundary of the land of the Amorites; **behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon, the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess it,** in modern English, go ahead and take it, **and contend with him in battle.** V. 25. **This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven,** not only the Canaanites, but all the other nations whom the news of their advance would reach, **who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.** V. 26. **And I sent messengers out of the Wilderness of Kedemoth,** on the southeastern boundary of the Amorite territory, where there was an easy passage over the Arnon, **unto Sihon, king of Heshbon,** with words of peace, in order to give him an opportunity to decide for himself and to avoid an offense against Jehovah, **saying,** v. 27. **Let me pass through thy land. I will go along by the highway; I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left.** Cp. Num. 21, 21. 22. V. 28. **Thou shalt sell me meat, food, for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet,** without any delay, v. 29. **(as the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me,) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord, our God, giveth us.** V. 30. **But Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him,** through his land; **for the Lord, thy God, hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.** All obduracy on the part of man is as much a deed of man's freedom, of his own wilful transgression, as it is a punishment of God. When man continues to harden his heart to the influence of God, then God, in turn, hardens the sinner until he becomes altogether callous toward all efforts of the Spirit. V. 31. **And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee; begin to possess that thou mayest inherit his land.** V. 32. **Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz,** Num. 21, 23. V. 33. **And the Lord, our God, delivered him before us; and we smote him and his sons and all his people,** Num. 21, 24. V. 34. **And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men and the women and the little ones of every city; we left none to remain,** for it was a war of extermination; v. 35. **only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took.** V. 36. **From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon,** in the extreme southern part of the territory, **and from the city that is by the river,** Ar or Areopolis, **even unto Gilead,** the southern boundary of which, generally speaking, was the Jabbok, **there was not one city too strong for us,** literally, "too high," too powerful to overcome; **the Lord, our God, delivered all unto us;** v. 37. **only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok,** toward the east and north, **nor unto the cities in the mountains,** the mountainous district of Ammonitis, **nor unto whatsoever the Lord, our God, forbade us.** Note that the Lord spared the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, nations related to Israel, since He wanted to give them time and opportunity for repentance. In the very midst of the unbelievers and His professed enemies the Lord has His elect, whom He intends to lead to repentance by the glorious manifestations of His kindness and mercy.

CHAPTER 3.

The Conquest of the Land East of Jordan.

THE OVERTHROW OF KING OG OF BASHAN. — V. 1. **Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan; and Og, the king of Bashan, came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei,** Num. 21, 33—35. V. 2. **And the Lord said unto me, Fear him not; for I will deliver him and all his people and his land into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.** The children of Israel, then, were sure of the victory before ever the battle began. V. 3. **So the Lord, our God, delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we smote him until none was left to him remaining;** for it was again a war of extermination. V. 4. **And we took all his cities at that time, that is, the fortified towns; there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob,** the northeastern section of this territory, 1 Kings 4, 13, about forty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee, the entire kingdom sometimes being included in the name Argob, **the kingdom of Og in Bashan;** for these sixty cities may be said to have been the very heart of the country. V. 5. **All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many.** The entire region is now known as the Hauran. V. 6. **And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon, king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city.** V. 7. **But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities we took for a prey to ourselves.** V. 8. **And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon,** which flows into the Dead Sea about the middle of its west side, **unto Mount Hermon,** in the extreme north, in the Anti-Lebanon range, v. 9. **(which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir,)** v. 10. **all the cities of the plain,** the valleys of Gilead, **and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.** V. 11. **For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants,** of the nations of giants that had formerly inhabited this region, Gen. 14, 5; **behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?** where Og may have left it on one of his campaigns of conquest. **Nine cubits was the length thereof and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man** (at about 18 inches per cubit). Rabbath was the capital of the children of Ammon, and its ruins may be seen to this day.

THE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY. — V. 12. **And this land which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.** Their territory thus extended from the Arnon to the Jabbok. V. 13. **And the rest of Gilead, the northern half, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.** Cp. Num. 32, 33. V. 14. **Jair, the son of Manasseh, took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi,** the inhabitants of two small kingdoms in the foothills of Mount Hermon, still independent at the time of David, 2 Sam. 3, 3; 10, 6; **and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day.** Num. 32, 41. V. 15. **And I gave Gilead,** the northern half, **unto Machir.** V. 16. **And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley,** the eastern half of the Jordan Valley, **and the border even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;** for their country was to the northeast of the Reubenites and the Gadites; v. 17. **the plain also,** the lowlands along the Jordan, **and Jordan,** to the middle of the stream, **and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth,** afterward the Sea of Galilee, **even unto the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea, under Ashdoth-pisgah eastward,** which was a hill with springs near the place where the Arnon flows into the Dead Sea. V. 18. **And I commanded you at that time, saying** (these words are addressed to the two and one half tribes which were to occupy the region east of the Jordan), **The Lord, your God, hath given you this land to possess it; ye shall pass over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war,** not all those of military age and ability, but a select number, 40,000 going with the army of Israel and 60,000 remaining for the protection of the cities and herds, Num. 32, 20—32; Josh. 4, 12. 13. V. 19. **But your wives and your little ones and your cattle (for I know that ye have much cattle) shall abide in your cities which I have given you,** v. 20. **until the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the Lord, your God, hath given them beyond Jordan,** on the west side; **and then shall ye return, every man unto his possession which I have given you,** Josh. 22, 4. True brotherly love demands that we bear one another's burden.

A CHARGE TO JOSHUA. — V. 21. **And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the Lord, your God, hath done unto these two kings; so shall**

the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. The conquered lands of the vanquished kings were lying before Joshua's sight, and this fact gave Joshua a perpetual guarantee of the Lord's assistance in the work which was still before him, which he must do after the death of Moses. V. 22. **Ye shall not fear them,** this was more than an encouragement, it was an outright command; **for the Lord, your God, He shall fight for you.** Note the emphatic repetition of the subject. V. 23. **And I besought the Lord at that time, saying,** v. 24. **O Lord God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness and Thy mighty hand,** namely, in the conquest of the country east of Jordan; **for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to Thy works and according to Thy might?** Jehovah's majesty and sublimity was singular, because He only is the true God. V. 25. **I pray Thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain,** the entire mountainous country of Canaan, **and Lebanon.** V. 26. **But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes,** Num. 20, 12, **and would not hear me,** He refused to change the decision which He had made at Meribah; **and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter,** Moses was not to add either prayer or wish to his words, for it would avail him nothing. V. 27. **Get thee up into the top of Pisgah,** to the highest point of the mountain range, which ran parallel to the Jordan on the eastern side, **and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it,** the Land of Promise, **with thine eyes; for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.** V. 28. **But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him,** Num. 27, 18. 23; **for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.** V. 29. **So we abode in the valley,** in the plains of the Jordan, **over against Beth-peor.** Cp. Num. 23, 28. We Christians should always be mindful of the fact that the Lord has given us the victory over all our spiritual enemies and is holding out before us the inheritance of the saints in light. And we should have the firm confidence that the Lord will continue His battling for us and will in due time bring us to the eternal mansions.

CHAPTER 4.

An Appeal Enjoining Obedience.

MOSES REMINDS THE PEOPLE OF THE LAW-GIVING. — V. 1. **Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you,** they were to heed carefully both the moral precepts which fixed their covenant relation toward Jehovah and the special obligations which rested upon them with regard to both God and men, **for to do them, that ye may live,** namely, in the enjoyment of a long and happy life, **and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you.** V. 2. **Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it,** for in either case the force of the commandment would be weakened and the Word of God changed into the precepts of men, **that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command you.** This does not merely mean keeping the wording intact and handing it down unchanged to posterity, but observing and doing what they enjoined. Cp. Matt. 5, 7. V. 3. **Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor,** when the Midianites succeeded in introducing whoredom and idolatry into the ranks of Israel, Num. 25; **for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord, thy God, hath destroyed them from among you.** V. 4. **But ye that did cleave unto the Lord, your God, are alive, every one of you, this day.** The reward of faithfulness and the punishment of unfaithfulness were thus plainly before their eyes. V. 5. **Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord, my God, commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.** V. 6. **Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations,** a matter of ordinary sound common sense, **which shall hear all these statutes,** the precepts as they governed the covenant relations of Israel, **and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.** It is an Old Testament form of the New Testament injunction that believers should let their light shine before men, Matt. 5, 16. These facts cause Moses to exclaim in a fervent, ecstatic appeal. V. 7. **For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them,** in whose midst God has revealed Himself in so open and definite a manner, **as the Lord, our God, is in all things that we call upon Him for?** Israel was the only nation with which Jehovah had entered into such a covenant relation, which was sure at all times of His almighty assistance, Ps. 34, 19; 145, 18. V. 8. **And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Law which I set before you this day?** All true righteousness of life has its roots in God, and the more the knowledge of the true God is darkened, the more is the foundation of all true law and order shaken to its very depths. V. 9.

Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, the miracles and the many evidences of God's presence during the years of the wilderness journey, **and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life, that is,** for so much as one minute; **but teach them thy sons, thy children,** and thy sons' sons, thy grandchildren, the command thus including three points: to remember, to observe, and to transmit in its integrity; v. 10. **specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord, thy God, in Horeb,** when the Law was given from Mount Sinai, **when the Lord said unto me, Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.** V. 11. **And ye came near and stood under the mountain,** at its foot; **and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven,** so that the fire and the smoke rose up into the sky as far as the eye could reach, **with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness,** for the happenings on the mountain were screened from the eyes of the people by a heavy screen of dark clouds. V. 12. **And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice,** the sound, of the words, **but saw no similitude,** no form of God; **only ye heard a voice.** God did not manifest Himself in any outline or shape which was visible to human eyes. V. 13. **And He declared unto you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments,** Ex. 20, 1—17; 34, 28; **and He wrote them upon two tables of stone.** The covenant consisted essentially in this, that the doing on the part of the people corresponded to the command on the part of the Lord. As the memory of God's goodness and of the covenant was to induce Israel to be faithful to Him, so we Christians should ever keep His kindness and His mercy before our eyes as a spur to a life of sanctification.

WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY. — V. 14. **And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it,** namely, the precepts contained in the legislation beginning with Ex. 21. V. 15. **Take ye, therefore, good heed unto yourselves,** every one was to watch carefully over his soul; **for ye saw no manner of similitude,** no form or outline which could be used as the basis for a picture, **on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire;** v. 16. **lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image,** either carved or hewn, **the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,** v. 17. **the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air,** v. 18. **the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth,** any statue or picture whatever which might be used for purposes of gross idolatry; v. 19. **and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them,** Rom. 1, 25, **and serve them, which the Lord, thy God, hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.** God's original purpose was that the heavenly bodies should serve mankind, Gen. 1, 17. 18. Since the heathen, however, carried away by the lure of the unknown, by the enticement of the light bodies, had given them divine honor, the Lord had permitted them to remain in their foolishness, as a punishment for turning from Him. V. 20. **But the Lord hath taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace,** a significant picture of the most severe misery and oppression, **even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day,** Ex. 19, 5. V. 21. **Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me for your sakes,** Num. 20, 12, **and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance;** v. 22. **but I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan; but ye shall go over and possess that good land.** The wistful tone which Moses employs shows how deeply he was affected by the Lord's ruling that excluded him from the Land of Promise. V. 23. **Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord, your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image or the likeness of anything which the Lord, thy God, hath forbidden thee.** V. 24. **For the Lord, thy God, is a consuming fire, even a jealous God,** whose righteous anger devours the children of disobedience. We should remember at all times that God will not be mocked, but that He resents every attack upon His holiness and righteousness and will punish all wilful transgressors.

THE APPEAL SUPPORTED BY A REFERENCE TO GOD'S KINDNESS. — V. 25. **When thou shalt beget children and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land,** literally, become old in the land, which would include the forgetting of the former acts of God's mercy, **and shall corrupt yourselves, the first zealous love for Jehovah having grown cold, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord, thy God, to provoke Him to anger,** v. 26. **I call heaven and earth,** as living, sensible creatures, **to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it;**

ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. The witness summoned by Moses would be able to testify to the fact that the Lord had given His people the choice of life and death, chap. 30, 19, and therefore was fully justified in punishing unfaithfulness. V. 27. **And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you,** Lev. 26, 33. All the judgments of the Lord upon His disobedient people are here included, down to the time of the Romans and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. V. 28. **And there,** in the captivity and in the final dispersal among the nations, **ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell,** Ps. 115, 4. 5; 135, 15. 16; Is. 44, 9; 46, 7. Having rejected Jehovah, they would find themselves condemned by Him in being given up to the foolishness of their idolatrous hearts. V. 29. **But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord, thy God,** turning back to Him in true repentance, **thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.** Cp. Luke 15, 17. The promise that the children of Israel should find Jehovah is a wonderful and comforting Gospel-message; for it assures them that His kindness, grace, and mercy will be poured out upon the truly repentant sinners once more. V. 30. **When thou art in tribulation, misery, oppression, and all these things are come upon thee,** find thee, strike thee, **even in the latter days,** in the far-distant future, **if thou turn to the Lord, thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice,** v. 31. **(for the Lord, thy God, is a merciful God,) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them.** The covenant of God's faithfulness and mercy would not be broken on His side. V. 32. **For ask now of the days that are past,** search the records of the world's history from the beginning, **which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, as far as the world extends, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it.** V. 33. **Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?** All of which goes to show that the Lord had singled out Israel for unusual manifestations of His kindness. V. 34. **Or hath God assayed** (essayed) **to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation,** as He did in leading Israel out of the midst of the Egyptians, **by temptations,** by which the position of Pharaoh over against the Lord was tried out, **by signs and by wonders,** the great plagues of Egypt, **and by war,** when the Egyptians were about to attack the children of Israel at the Red Sea, **and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm,** Ex. 13, 3; 6, 6, **and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord, your God, did for you in Egypt before your eyes?** V. 35. **Unto thee,** before every other nation on the earth, **it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord, He is God; there is none else beside Him.** He is the one exclusive, the one true God. V. 36. **Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice,** Ex. 19, 9. 19, **that He might instruct thee; and upon earth He showed thee His great fire,** in the burning of Mount Sinai; **and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire.** The purpose of this instruction was to impart a wholesome fear of the sanctity of Jehovah to the hearts of the people. V. 37. **And because He loved thy fathers,** from Abraham down, **therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in His sight with His mighty power out of Egypt,** Ex. 13, 3—14; v. 38. **to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day,** for the conquest of the country east of the Jordan was a guarantee of the conquest of the entire country. V. 39. **Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart,** contemplate the lessons of all these happenings most carefully, **that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else,** there is only one true God; He is unity. V. 40. **Thou shalt keep, therefore, His statutes and His commandments which I command thee this day,** both those pertaining to them, concerning them, as men, and those having reference to them as the covenant people, **that it may go well with thee,** since they would have Jehovah on their side, **and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, forever;** for a long and happy life, accompanied by the goodness of the Lord, is a blessing. We Christians also know the precepts of the Lord's holy will and should live in accordance with them. If we are always mindful of the fact that God has redeemed us from the kingdom of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, we shall also be ready to serve Him in true obedience, to do according to His commandments.

CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST ADDRESS. — V. 41. **Then Moses severed,** set apart, **three cities on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising,** in the territory of the two and one half tribes, v. 42. **that the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbor unawares,** without premeditation and intention, **and hated him not in times past, and that,**

fleeing unto one of these cities, he might live, chap. 19, 4—13; Num. 35, 9—34; v. 43. namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, in the steppes, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, from which this region afterwards received the name Gaulanitis, of the Manassites. V. 44. And this is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel; v. 45. these are the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which Moses spake unto the children of Israel after they came forth out of Egypt, v. 46. on this side Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, Num. 21, 24, after they were come forth out of Egypt; v. 47. and they possessed his land and the land of Og, king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising; v. 48. from Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto Mount Sion, which is Hermon, v. 49. and all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, even unto the Sea of the Plain, the Dead Sea, under the springs of Pisgah, near the mouth of the Arnon. This detailed description of time and place serves as an introduction to the great exposition of the Law which follows in the next part of the Book of Deuteronomy.

CHAPTER 5.

The Repetition of the Decalog.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS GIVEN ON SINAI. V. 1. And Moses called all Israel and said unto them, he intended his voice to reach as many as possible and to make the announcement as impressive as possible, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them, watch carefully to perform them. After this brief introduction, Moses immediately launches forth in the repetition of the Decalog as it was given by the Lord on Mount Sinai, Ex. 20, 2—17. V. 2. The Lord, our God, made a covenant with us in Horeb, in the third month after their departure out of Egypt. V. 3. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, with the patriarchs, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The covenant which the Lord made with Israel as a nation differed from those made with Noah and Abraham, especially as to the extent and inclusiveness of the obligations imposed. V. 4. The Lord talked with you face to face, as one person might talk with another, but not in visible form, in the mount out of the midst of the fire, Ex. 20, 22, v. 5, (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, Ex. 20, 21, in the capacity of mediator, to show you the word of the Lord, that is, to make it known to them; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, Ex. 20, 18, and went not up into the mount,) saying, v. 6. I am the Lord, thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. There is here a reminder both of the fact that they were a peculiar people to the Lord and that a typical part of His redemptive work had been accomplished in delivering them out of their position as slaves. V. 7. Thou shalt have none other gods before Me, either over and above Him, or by His side, or beneath Him, as subordinate gods; He is the one and only God. V. 8. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, a carved or hewn picture or statue of wood, stone, or metal, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth, chap. 4, 15—17. V. 9. Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for that is the real point of the prohibition, the prevention of idolatry; for I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, if the children follow their sinful parents in their iniquity, in their wicked behavior, v. 10. and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments, since it pleases the Lord to make His grace and mercy known in much more abundant measure than His wrath and justice. The love toward God is a fruit of faith, itself a gift of God, and this love shows itself in keeping His commandments. V. 11. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain, not use it in a foolish, fruitless manner; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. Such a person cannot plead innocence; his transgression will invariably be charged to his account and will be demanded of him with a sharp reckoning. V. 12. Keep the Sabbath-day to sanctify it, observe it as a day set apart for the worship of Jehovah, as the Lord, thy God, hath commanded thee. V. 13. Six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work; v. 14. but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. Cp. Ex.

20, 8—11. V. 15. **And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord, thy God, brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm,** an expression denoting the exercise of God's almighty power; **therefore the Lord, thy God, commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.** The fact that Israel was the redeemed people of God and thus distinguished by Him above all nations was to be brought out in their Sabbath observance. The Sabbath-day, as a day of rest by God's command, has been abrogated in the New Testament, and we Christians do not transfer to any other day the special ceremonial prohibitions which attached to the Sabbath of old. Cp. Matt. 12, 8; Mark 2, 28; Gal. 4, 9—11; Col. 2, 16. 17. But the principle of the commandment is in force to-day as it ever was. It has been most succinctly and successfully stated by Luther: "We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it." V. 16. **Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord, thy God, hath commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.** The New Testament form of this commandment is given by Paul, Eph. 6, 2. 3. V. 17. **Thou shalt not kill.** V. 18. **Neither shalt thou commit adultery.** V. 19. **Neither shalt thou steal.** V. 20. **Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.** V. 21. **Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's.** The fact that the last commandment, or the last two commandments, differ slightly in form from the corresponding precepts in Ex. 20, 17, is due to the special object in view at this point, when Israel was about to enter upon its possessions. The Law is in force to the end of time. It assists the regenerate in overcoming the temptations of the flesh, and serves as a rule and guide in showing them the holy will of God. It leads the way in sanctification.

Admonition to Heed the Law. — V. 22. **These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice,** Ex. 19, 16—19; **and He added no more,** only the Decalog was given in this manner. **And He wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them unto me,** Ex. 24, 12; 31, 18. V. 23. **And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders;** v. 24. **and ye said, Behold, the Lord, our God, hath showed us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire; we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth,** chap. 4, 33; Ex. 20, 18. 19. V. 25. **Now, therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord, our God, any more, then we shall die.** The consciousness of their sinfulness would rest upon them so heavily as to make them die for fear and dread of God's majesty. V. 26. **For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire as we have, and lived?** Flesh in itself, natural man in his inherited sinfulness, to which is added the guilt of the many transgressions in thought, word, and deed, is opposed to the holiness of God, is conscious of the fact that the punishment upon sin is death, John 3, 6. V. 27. **Go thou near and hear all that the Lord, our God, shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord, our God, shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it,** Ex. 20, 19. They were altogether ready to accept the service of Moses as mediator between the Lord and themselves. Note that the speeches are here given in their full form, since Moses was speaking to the children of those who actually spoke these words at Mount Sinai. V. 28. **And the Lord heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken.** Their plea had been prompted by the consciousness of their unworthiness before the Lord; it showed a condition of the heart which was peculiarly receptive to the precepts which Jehovah was about to give. V. 29. **O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!** The state of mind which Israel showed here is best adapted to heed the commandments of the Lord and to follow the directions of His holy will. But even here there seems to be a show of apprehension concerning the lasting qualities of the professed feeling. V. 30. **Go, say to them, Get you into your tents again,** since their petition was granted. V. 31. **But as for thee, stand thou here by Me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.** In this way Moses became the formal mouthpiece of the Lord, the recognized mediator between Him and the people, at their own request. V. 32. **Ye shall observe to do, therefore, as the Lord, your God, hath commanded you; ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the**

left. V. 33. **Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord, your God, hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.** The picture is that of a straight road, every deviation from which will plunge the wayfarer into destruction. It will be the aim of every Christion to follow the narrow pathway and to enter in at the strait gate which leads to eternal life, through the mercy and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 6.

Obedience to the One God and His Law.

THE EMPHATIC ADMONITION. — V. 1. **Now, these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments,** the general laws, the special ordinances which concerned Israel as the covenant people, and the observances which flow from the obligations which men owe to God and to their fellow-men, **which the Lord, your God, commanded to teach you that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it;** v. 2. **that thou mightest fear the Lord, thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command thee,** in his capacity of teacher, of representative of God, **thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged,** for the blessing of a long life often follows obedience to God's commandments. That is the object which the Lord had in mind in giving His Law, to awaken the fear of God in the hearts and to have this faith manifest itself in good works. V. 3. **Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee,** Gen. 15, 5, **in the land that floweth with milk and honey.** There are three promises included in this statement: That God would surely bring the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, that they would there enjoy the rich prosperity which the fertility of the land assured, and that they would increase greatly in numbers, as the Lord had said to Abraham. Moses now formally pronounces the first and most important command, the summary of all the other commandments. V. 4. **Hear, O Israel: The Lord, our God, is one Lord,** Jehovah the One. The Lord of Israel is the absolute God, and there is none other. With these words Moses opens the exposition and the inculcation of the Lord's precepts; for unless the worshiper gives his whole heart and mind to this God alone, he cannot perform His will. V. 5. **And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might,** Mark 12, 30. All the powers of the inner life, of affection and will, should be centered in God, in the fulfilment of His will. V. 6. **And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart,** that is the prerequisite, the condition which is necessary if the believer will do the Lord's will: he will have the words containing His will before his mind's eye always. V. 7. **And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,** impressing and inculcating them upon their minds while they are still in the plastic state, **and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.** They should, in other words, form the chief topic of consideration and of conversation in the Israelitish family. There is a fine hint here that home devotions and home teaching of the words and will of the Lord should be a prominent feature in every Christian family. V. 8. **And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand,** as a reminder that they should be performed at all times; **and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes,** as a reminder that the words of the Lord should be the chief object of meditation in the believer. The Jews, in later times, insisted upon a literal understanding of the command, and it became the fashion among the more devout Jews to wear little cases with the Scripture-texts Ex. 13, 1—11; 11—17; Deut. 6, 4—10; 11, 13—26, called *Tephillim*, fastened to the left hand and to the forehead — the phylacteries of Matt. 23, 5. V. 9. **And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house,** on the door-posts, **and on thy gates.** This command was later also reduced to a mere outward observance in the Jewish custom of the *Mesusah*, according to which a piece of parchment containing Deut. 6, 4—9 and 11, 13—20 was placed in a small wood or metal case and fastened to the right door-post of the house. V. 10. **And it shall be, when the Lord, thy God, shall have brought thee into the land which He sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,** v. 11. **and houses full of good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full,** all of which emphasizes the rich temporal blessings which the children of Israel might expect in the land of Canaan, v. 12. **then beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.** There is always this danger connected with material prosperity, that men forget and deny the Lord, Prov. 30, 8. 9. V. 13.

Thou shalt fear the Lord, thy God, not with slavish terror, but with reverential awe, **and serve Him,** which follows and flows out of the true fear of the Lord, **and shalt swear by His name.** Note that oaths of the right kind are not forbidden, but that they must be made in the name of the true God, for as such they are a manifestation of the worship of the heart, of the proper attitude toward the one true God, namely, as the Witness of truth and the Avenger of falsehood. V. 14. **Ye shall not go after other gods,** follow them like misguided sheep, **of the gods of the people which are round about you,** the various objects of worship adored by the heathen nations of Canaan, v. 15. **(for the Lord, thy God, is a jealous God among you,** Ex. 20, 5) **lest the anger of the Lord, thy God, be kindled against thee,** like a fire that grows beyond control, **and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.** That was the punishment which He threatened in the case of gross idolatry. These admonitions apply also to us. It is our duty not only to ponder the will of the Lord in our hearts, but also to confess it with our mouth and to practise it in our life.

The Admonition Substantiated. — V. 16. **Ye shall not tempt the Lord, your God,** put either His mercy or His righteousness to a test, **as ye tempted Him in Massah,** Ex. 17, 2. 7, in the matter of demanding water to drink in the wilderness. V. 17. **Ye shall diligently keep,** literally, "observing ye shall observe," **the commandments of the Lord, your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He hath commanded thee.** It was and is a sacred duty, a solemn obligation. V. 18. **And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers,** v. 19. **to cast out all thine enemies from before thee,** to make room for His own people, **as the Lord hath spoken.** This was the reward of faithfulness, and its object was to strengthen Israel in its loyalty to Jehovah. V. 20. **And when thy son,** any of the children or descendants, **asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which the Lord, our God, hath commanded you?** v. 21. **then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt,** forced to perform the work of slaves; **and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand,** Ex. 3, 19; v. 22. **and the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and sore,** namely, the bad plagues, **upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes,** chap. 4, 34; v. 23. **and He brought us out from thence that He might bring us in to give us the land which He sware unto our fathers.** Thus the Lord carried out His promise to its full completion. V. 24. **And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord, our God, for our good always,** for it is always to the believer's own advantage if he walks in the ways of the Lord, **that He might preserve us alive as it is at this day.** V. 25. **And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord, our God, as He hath commanded us.** In this the righteousness of the children of Israel consisted, namely, that they observed and kept the will of the Lord in the love which flows from true faith. Thus the righteousness of faith always precedes the righteousness of life, and the latter serves to indicate the presence of the former. The believers in Christ will not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and thus give evidence of the fact that they are possessors of justification by faith.

CHAPTER 7.

All Communion with Heathen Forbidden.

The Eradication of Idolatry Commanded. V. 1. **When the Lord, thy God, shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it,** an event certain to materialize in the near future, **and hath cast out many nations before thee,** great in numbers, in resources, and in valor, **the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;** v. 2. **and when the Lord, thy God, shall deliver them before thee,** give them into the hands of the children of Israel, so that they would be witnesses of His power, **thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them,** it was to be a war of extermination. **Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them,** give them no quarter, reject all offers of submission. The measure of sins of these heathen nations was full, and therefore the Lord wanted them to be removed entirely. V. 3. **Neither shalt thou make marriages with them,** thus becoming allied to them by ties of relationship; **thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son,** to the son of any member of these nations, **nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son,** for the giving in marriage is the prerogative of parents to this day. V. 4. **For they will turn away thy son from following Me,** the danger being particularly great when the unbelieving wife sets out to lead her husband astray, **that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroy thee**

suddenly, for that was the punishment which the Lord had placed upon idolatry, chap. 4, 26. There are so many dangers to the faith connected with mixed marriages, when a Christian marries an unbeliever, or one belonging to a sectarian church, that the warning must be sounded again and again. V. 5. **But thus shall ye deal with them: Ye shall destroy their altars,** which were dedicated to the abominations of idolatry, **and break down their images,** the pillars or statues of stone which represented their idols, **and cut down their groves,** wooden pillars erected to Astarte, the goddess of love and fruitfulness, **and burn their graven images with fire,** completely destroy even the last vestige of them. All idolatry is an abomination before the Lord, and He wanted Israel to turn away from every evidence of it with the utmost loathing, just as He expects Christians to shun intimacy with unbelievers, lest they lose the precious jewel of their faith. V. 6. **For thou art an holy people unto the Lord, thy God,** consecrated to Him, set apart for His service; **the Lord, thy God, hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself,** a peculiar people, a people of His property, **above all people that are upon the face of the earth.** They were God's possession, which He set apart for Himself. V. 7. **The Lord did not set His love upon you,** turn to you, cling to you in love, **nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people,** more numerous and more powerful than other nations; **for ye were the fewest of all people,** Abraham, their forefather, being a single person over against great and powerful nations when the Lord called him; v. 8. **but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand,** Ex. 13, 3. 14, **and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen,** from the position of shameful serfdom, **from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.** Israel was never to forget that it was pure love and mercy on God's part which prompted Him to make them His people, and no merit on their part. V. 9. **Know, therefore, that the Lord, thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations,** for He is most eager to show mercy and love, it is His greatest delight to reward those that love Him; v. 10. **and repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them,** in this they get their just dues. **He will not be slack to him that hateth Him; He will repay him to his face.** God is not like a weak, indulgent father, who will overlook the transgressions of his children, often in maudlin sentimentality. V. 11. **Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which I command thee this day, to do them,** because Jehovah, the faithful covenant God, is equally energetic in mercy and in holiness. We Christians should also never forget that God has chosen us out of the world of unbelievers, not because we are in any way better than others, but out of pure goodness and mercy. Therefore we should thank God for this unmerited mercy, serve and obey Him, and keep His covenant with all faithfulness.

THE EXTERMINATION OF THE HEATHEN NATIONS ENJOINED. — V. 12. **Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord, thy God, shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He sware unto thy fathers.** He would fulfil all the promises of mercy given to the patriarchs, and He would carry out the terms of the covenant with respect to both rewards and punishments. V. 13. **And He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee,** as manifestations of His love; **He will also bless the fruit of thy womb,** in granting a numerous posterity, **and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee.** V. 14. **Thou shalt be blessed above all people; there shall not be male or female barren among you or among your cattle,** for barrenness was considered almost a curse among the Israelites. V. 15. **And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness,** especially in the form of epidemics, **and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt which thou knowest upon thee, but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.** In spite of the great advance of the last half century, medical science to this day is unable to account for the virulence of many epidemics except on the basis of divine interference and punishment. Cp. Ex. 23, 26. V. 16. **And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord, thy God, shall deliver thee,** giving them into the hands of Israel; **thine eye shall have no pity upon them,** all false sympathy, which might enter the heart through the eye as it witnesses the plight of the enemy must be banished; **neither shalt thou serve their gods, for that will be a snare unto thee,** which would plunge them, too, into destruction. V. 17. **If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I, how can I dispossess them,** get into possession of the country now occupied by them? Little faith on the part of the believers has won many victories for the forces of darkness. V. 18. **Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord, thy God, did unto Pharaoh and unto all Egypt:** v. 19. **the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched-out arm whereby the Lord, thy God, brought**

thee out, chap. 4, 34; **so shall the Lord, thy God, do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.** The memory of benefits received in the past was to strengthen their faith in God's help also in the future. V. 20. **Moreover, the Lord, thy God, will send the hornet among them,** Ex. 23, 28, a special terror intended to make them lose heart, **until they that are left and hide themselves from thee be destroyed;** for Israel was to be as active in the work of extermination as the instrument which God used. V. 21. **Thou shalt not be affrighted at them,** filled with the terror of little faith; **for the Lord, thy God, is among you, a mighty God and terrible,** whose judgments made Him an object of dread among all nations. V. 22. **And the Lord, thy God, will put out those nations before thee little by little,** Ex. 23, 29. 30; **thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee,** for they were at that time not yet numerous enough to occupy the entire land at once. V. 23. **But the Lord, thy God, shall deliver them unto thee,** while they themselves would look on in surprised wonder, **and shall destroy,** overthrow, **them with a mighty destruction until they be destroyed.** V. 24. **And He shall deliver their kings into thine hand,** Josh. 10, 24. 25. 42, **and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven; there shall no man be able to stand before thee until thou have destroyed them.** V. 25. **The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them,** with which they were overlaid, **or take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein,** they would become contaminated by the mere fact of having it in their possession; **for it is an abomination to the Lord, thy God,** as were all objects that were used for idolatrous purposes, Josh. 7. V. 26. **Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it,** having been defiled by contact with it; **but thou shalt utterly detest it,** look upon it only with the utmost horror and loathing, **and thou shalt utterly abhor it,** regard it with loathing; **for it is a cursed thing.** In Christians this attitude will keep them from all defilement of unbelief and of the lust of the flesh.

CHAPTER 8.

An Exhortation to Obedience.

A REFERENCE TO GOD'S GOODNESS.—V. 1. **All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers.** The constant repetition of the same leading thought serves to impress it upon the minds of the hearers with great force. V. 2. **And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord, thy God, led thee these forty years in the wilderness,** with all the various attendant miracles, **to humble thee** under God's mighty hand, **and to prove thee,** to test out their trust in God's almighty power, love, and justice, **to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no.** It is only when a person despairs of his own strength and is humbled from his self-presumption that he is ready to hear and obey God. The entire wilderness journey had an educational purpose. V. 3. **And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger,** Ex. 16, 2. 3, **and fed thee with manna,** Ex. 16, 12—35, **which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know,** and the very fact that God was able to keep them alive without the food ordinarily demanded by men was intended to keep them humble; **that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.** For the maintenance of life in His creatures the Lord is not bound to the food upon which men, by His order, must depend, but He has ways and means to sustain life by the direct exercise of His almighty power, if He so chooses. In this sense Jesus quoted this passage when He was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, Matt. 4, 4. V. 4. **Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee,** compelling them to wear torn and insufficient clothes, **neither did thy foot swell,** become blistered on account of their being compelled to march barefooted for lack of sandals, **these forty years.** This was a special mark of God's providence and loving care for His people, a miracle of His goodness. V. 5. **Thou shalt also consider in thine heart,** ponder that fact continually, **that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord, thy God, chasteneth thee;** everything which He did for them had the object of educating them, of training them for His service. Both His punishments and the manifestations of His goodness served this purpose. V. 6. **Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord, thy God, to walk in His ways,** as He pointed them out in the Law, **and to fear Him;** for the fear of the Lord, as the outgrowth of faith, is the source of all good works. The obligation of obedience is now further emphasized by an enumeration of the excellencies of the Land of Promise, where even the highest blessings, because so common, partook of the nature of the ordinary. V. 7. **For the Lord, thy God, bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of foun-**

tains, springs, and depths, underground watercourses, **that spring out of valleys and hills,** the land being richly watered both for agriculture and for stock-raising; v. 8. **a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive,** that is, of olive-orchards from which the best oil was obtained, **and honey;** v. 9. **a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness,** not in poverty, misery, and want; **thou shalt not lack anything in it,** everything being supplied that was needed for comfortable and even luxurious living; **a land whose stones are iron,** for iron ore was found in various parts of Canaan, especially in the North, **and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass;** traces of former copper works have been found in the Lebanon range. V. 10. **When thou hast eaten and art full,** having enjoyed the various blessings as here enumerated, **then thou shalt bless the Lord, thy God, for the good land which He hath given thee.** It is on the basis of this and similar passages in Scripture that the believers, also in the New Testament, say grace and return thanks at meal-time, Matt. 14, 19; 15, 36; 26, 26.

A WARNING AGAINST PRIDE. — V. 11. **Beware that thou forget not the Lord, thy God, in not keeping His commandments and His judgments and His statutes which I command thee this day;** for true gratitude is not confined to the words of the mouth; v. 12. **lest, when thou hast eaten and art full,** enjoying the rich abundance of God's blessings, **and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein,** v. 13. **and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied,** a picture of the highest prosperity, v. 14. **then thine heart be lifted up,** in pride and presumption, **and thou forget the Lord, thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;** v. 15. **who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness,** Is. 63, 12—14, **wherein were fiery serpents,** Num. 21, 6, **and scorpions, and drought,** literally, "a land of thirst," **where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint,** Num. 20, 11; v. 16. **who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end,** cp. v. 3 (only a few of the vicissitudes of the wilderness are touched upon for the sake of illustration); v. 17. **and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth,** for there is always the danger of such presumption and overweening pride, Prov. 30, 9; Dan. 4. V. 18. **But thou shalt remember the Lord, thy God,** always acknowledging Him as the Giver of all good gifts, Jas. 1, 17; **for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth,** a fact which so many rich people overlook or forget, **that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day;** for in the case of Israel the promises of the covenant were being fulfilled even then. V. 19. **And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord, thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them,** becoming guilty of deliberate idolatry, **I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.** Cp. chap. 4, 25—27; 6, 14. V. 20. **As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish, because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord, your God.** If they joined the heathen nations of Canaan in their enmity towards Jehovah, they would also have to share the punishment which would surely strike them, had, in fact, already begun. The same thing applies to all believers. Through humiliations and temptations the Lord tests out the faith of His children, in order to keep them humble in prosperity as well. And the Christians will ever be mindful of the fact that it is not their own ability and intelligence to which, in the last analysis, they owe their position and their wealth, but the goodness of the Lord. With this thought ever uppermost in their mind, they will receive the gifts of His grace with due gratitude.

CHAPTER 9.

Warning against Self-Righteousness.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS DENOUNCED. — V. 1. **Hear, O Israel!** Moses calls out to them to attend, to heed his warning. **Thou art to pass over Jordan this day,** all arrangements and preparations having been made at this present time, the entry into the country west of Jordan was to be expected at any time, in the very near future, **to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself,** both more numerous and more warlike, **cities great and fenced up to heaven,** to all appearances unconquerable on account of the strength of their fortifications, v. 2. **a people great and tall,** of giant stature and strength, **the children of the Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!** They had the reputation of being invincible. V. 3. **Understand, therefore, this day** (or: Thou understandest) **that the Lord, thy God, is He which goeth over before thee,** as the Leader and Champion of the people; **as a consuming fire He shall de-**

stroy them, as a great fire might devour a handful of tinder, and He shall bring them down before thy face, humble them by taking their courage from them; **so shalt thou drive them out and destroy them quickly,** that is, when any nation would be attacked, their aim should be its extermination in the shortest possible space of time, **as the Lord hath said unto thee,** Ex. 23, 23. 27. In this connection Moses issues his warning against self-righteousness, for it is not only the pride and presumption which ascribes good fortune and wealth to one's own strength and ingenuity that must be curbed, but also that attitude which accepts success as due the merits of one's own virtue and perfection. V. 4. **Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord, thy God, hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land,** that being the manner in which smirking self-satisfaction expresses itself; **but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee.** V. 5. **Not for thy righteousness or for the uprightness of thine heart,** for that imaginary personal excellence, **dost thou go to possess their land,** this factor, if it existed, did not enter into the Lord's calculations; **but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord, thy God, doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** The wickedness of the Canaanites alone would have been reason enough for the Lord to exterminate them and to give their land to the children of Israel, but His chief reason was founded upon His faithfulness, since He wanted to fulfil the promise given to the patriarchs. It is a fact which should be kept in remembrance at all times, that all blessings and benefits of Jehovah are expressions of His unmerited kindness and mercy, this being true especially of all spiritual gifts. V. 6. **Understand, therefore, that the Lord, thy God, giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people,** Ex. 32, 9; 33, 3; 34, 9. That was the Lord's estimate of the children of Israel, and that is His judgment regarding all men by nature, John 3, 6. The fact that all gifts of God come to us through His love and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us, should serve to keep us humble in His sight.

Instances of Rebellious Behavior. — In support of the term "stiff-necked people," which he had just applied to the children of Israel, Moses now adduces a few incidents from the wilderness journey. V. 7. **Remember and forget not how thou provokedst the Lord, thy God, to wrath in the wilderness,** their rebelliousness had been a constant challenge to the wrath of God; **from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place ye have been rebellious against the Lord.** It was an unsparing censure, a sharp reproof, for it was necessary that the people feel the heinousness of their sin, in order to remain in the fellowship of the Lord in proper humility. V. 8. **Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath,** in the matter of the golden calf, **so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you,** Ex. 32, 4—10. V. 9. **When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you,** of which the Decalog was the nucleus, when the people should have awaited his return with the most reverential suspense and attention, **then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water,** Ex. 24, 18; v. 10. **and the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God,** engraved by the Lord Himself in some miraculous manner; **and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly,** when the children of Israel, by God's command, had been gathered at the foot of the mountain, Ex. 19, 17. V. 11. **And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant,** which contained the Ten Commandments, as the basis of the covenant between Jehovah and His people, Ex. 19, 5. V. 12. **And the Lord said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.** They had left the way of the Lord and entered upon one of their own choosing, of idolatry and enmity toward God. V. 13. **Furthermore, the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people;** v. 14. **let Me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven,** by a judgment of utter extermination; **and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they,** Ex. 32, 9. 10. V. 15. **So I turned,** after entering his first intercessory plea, Ex. 32, 11—14, **and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands.** V. 16. **And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the Lord, your God, and had made you a molten calf; ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the Lord had commanded you,** for He had laid great emphasis upon the exclusion of every form of idolatry in their midst. V. 17. **And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes,** Ex. 32, 19. V. 18. **And I fell down be-**

fore the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights, Ex. 32, 31; **I did neither eat bread nor drink water because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.** It was an act of intense and continued intercession without parallel in the annals of mere human beings by which Moses succeeded in gaining the Lord's consent to forgive the people and to accept them as His children once more. V. 19. **For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you,** for such was the intention of Jehovah at that time. **But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also,** Ex. 32, 14; 33, 17. V. 20. **And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him,** this fact being related here to supplement the story in Exodus; **and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.** Moses includes this fact in his address in order to indicate that the selection of Aaron for the office of high priest was also a manifestation of pure divine grace. V. 21. **And I took your sin,** the visible expression of their idolatry, **the calf which ye had made, and burned it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust; and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount,** Ex. 32, 20. Moses now refers to other instances which proved that the Israelites were a rebellious and stiff-necked people. V. 22. **And at Taberah,** Num. 11, 1—3, **and at Massah,** Ex. 17, 7, **and at Kibrothhattaavah,** Ex. 11, 4—34, **ye provoked the Lord to wrath,** for theirs was a chronic rebellious dissatisfaction. V. 23. **Likewise, when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea,** upon their first arrival at the border of Canaan, when the spies were to report on the best roads to take, Num. 13, 3; 14, 1; chap. 1, 20. 21, **saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you, then ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, your God, and ye believed Him not, nor hearkened to His voice,** Ps. 106, 24. 25. V. 24. **Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.** All these facts emphasized his admonition against self-righteousness. After this digression, Moses returns to the relation of events at Horeb. V. 25. **Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first, because the Lord had said He would destroy you,** and it was the intention of Moses to avert this catastrophe by his prayer. V. 26. **I prayed, therefore, unto the Lord and said, O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance,** this statement including a correction of the Lord's charge, in which He had called them the people of Moses, v. 12, **which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.** Moses thus reminded the Lord of both His almighty power and of His mercy, as He had manifested them in setting Israel free from the bondage of Egypt. V. 27. **Remember Thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness,** their godless tendencies, **nor to their sin;** Moses pleaded that the Lord would show the same love and forbearance to the children that He had shown to the fathers; and there is always a delicate reference to the promise of the Lord, as given to the patriarchs; v. 28. **lest the land whence Thou broughtest us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.** Moses wants the honor of Jehovah, His reputation for love toward His people, unstained before the heathen nations, even if Israel thought so little of that honor. V. 29. **Yet they are Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest out by Thy mighty power and by Thy stretched-out arm.** This prayer, if compared with that given Ex. 32, 11—13. 31. 32, shows that Moses here noted down the gist of his intercessory pleading during those memorable forty days, when he varied his petition from time to time, as he struggled with the Lord for the people whom he loved. The true prayer of intercession is importunate, but not wilful, and bases its arguments upon the promises of the Lord, appealing to His honor and love.

CHAPTER 10.

The Sum of God's Commands.

A FURTHER RECITAL OF WILDERNESS EVENTS. V. 1. **At that time,** when Moses was engaged in his earnest intercession for Israel, **the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the mount,** Ex. 34, 1. 2, **and make thee an ark of wood,** Ex. 25, 10. Moses here, as often, groups events which belong together logically, even though this is not the chronological order. V. 2. **And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark.** This was done at the time of the dedication of the Tabernacle, Ex. 40, 20. V. 3. **And I made an ark of shittim wood,** Ex. 37, 1, **and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first,** Ex. 34, 4, **and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand,** literally, "in both

my hands." V. 4. **And He wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments,** or, words, **which the Lord spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them unto me.** V. 5. **And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.** The narrative here again shows that "Moses groups events here with reference to the impression he wished to make, and without reference to the order of time in which they occurred. These very differences may be fairly urged as proofs of the Mosaic authorship." V. 6. **And the children of Israel took their journey,** when the wilderness legislation had been brought to a close, **from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera.** Both the wells here mentioned and the station of Mosera, or Moseroth, were in the territory of the sons of Jaakan, the latter town being at the foot of Mount Hor. **There Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar, his son, ministered in the priest's office in his stead.** This was another evidence of God's mercy, that He maintained the office of high priest in their midst after the death of Aaron. V. 7. **From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters,** Num. 33, 30—33. Moses mentions these external blessings in this connection as being examples of the special benefits which accompanied the renewal of the covenant relation. God had turned back to His people with His kindness and grace. V. 8. **At that time,** while Israel was journeying in the wilderness, while the covenant relation was being reestablished, **the Lord separated the tribe of Levi,** Num. 3, 6, **to bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord,** as the congregation journeyed from one station to the next, **to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him and to bless in His name unto this day,** Num. 4; 18, 1—6. V. 9. **Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren,** in the form of a separate territory in the land of Canaan, Num. 18, 20. 24; Ezek. 44, 28; **the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord, thy God, promised him.** The Levites were to devote their entire lives to the service of the Lord, unhindered by special worries of business. V. 10. **And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights,** chap. 9, 18. 25; **and the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also, and the Lord would not destroy thee,** chap. 9, 19. V. 11. **And the Lord said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, as their leader, that they may go in and possess the land which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them.** The covenant relation being now fully established, the children of Israel were to take possession of the covenant land as soon as possible. Cp. Ex. 34, 10. 11.

WHAT THE FEAR OF GOD DEMANDS. — V. 12. **And now, Israel, what doth the Lord, thy God, require of thee,** thus Moses asks in a powerful appeal, **but to fear the Lord, thy God,** with the fear which flowed out of the realization of His grace and mercy, **to walk in all His ways,** as a manifestation of the right veneration, **and to love Him, and to serve the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul,** as the culmination and completion of the true worship of Jehovah, v. 13. **to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes,** both the precepts of the covenant and the obligations of the universal Moral Law, **which I command thee this day for thy good?** The true fear of the Lord, as it learns to understand the mercy of God, is ever the source of love toward Him, which, in turn, manifests itself in a wholehearted service that puts aside all selfish motives. V. 14. **Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens,** the highest heaven with all its glory, **is the Lord's, thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.** Such is the majesty, the exaltation, of the mighty God, who surely does not need any man to complete His happiness, to make His bliss more perfect. V. 15. **Only the Lord,** in free grace and mercy, **had a delight in thy fathers to love them,** He chose to show them His affection in this manner, **and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day;** for the people were abundantly experiencing the richness of His love. V. 16. **Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart,** said of the removal of the hardness and callousness which was indifferent to the many manifestations of God's mercy, **and be no more stiff-necked,** rebellious, unwilling to follow His leadership. Without this preparation of the heart, which is essentially repentance, neither true fear nor love of God is possible. V. 17. **For the Lord, your God, is God of gods,** high above all idols to whom that name is falsely applied, **and Lord of lords,** immeasurably exalted above all the princes of this earth, **a great God, a mighty, and a terrible,** 1 Tim. 6, 15; Ps. 95, 3, **which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward,** His justice cannot be deflected by any attempt at bribery; He is far removed from all the petty faults of human judges, Lev. 19, 15. The very imagining of Him in terms of human weakness is an insult to His greatness. And this great might and this loving mercy are blended in just the proper manner. V. 18. **He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow,** those whose natural protector has been taken from them, **and loveth the stranger,** one likely to be subjected to oppression, **in giving him food and rai-**

ment. This example of God's compassionate love is held before the people for a special reason. V. 19. **Love ye, therefore, the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt,** and the remembrance of those experiences, which many of the Israelites could recall from the days of their childhood and youth, was to be an inducement to them to exercise the virtues of mercy and compassion. V. 20. **Thou shalt fear the Lord, thy God;** for that is the essence of all worship and the fulfilment of the First Commandment; **Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave,** cling firmly to Him alone in all vicissitudes of life, **and swear by His name,** chap. 6, 13. V. 21. **He is thy praise,** in whom they should glory, for He had given them many occasions to sing His praises, **and He is thy God,** the supreme good, the essence of all goodness, **that hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen,** for they were deeds of His divine power, which gave evidence of His incomparable majesty and had been performed in assisting the children of Israel. V. 22. **Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons,** Gen. 46, 27; **and now the Lord, thy God, hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude,** as He had promised Abraham, Gen. 15, 5. The same almighty and merciful God is the trust of His children throughout the ages.

CHAPTER 11.

The Blessing of Jehovah.

AN INDUCEMENT TO KEEP HIS LAWS. — V. 1. **Therefore thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, and keep His charge,** whatever He has ordained to be observed, **and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, alway.** This admonition is repeated time and again, as being the basis of all the other exhortations. V. 2. **And know ye this day,** think it over carefully, in order to understand it properly; **for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord, your God,** the many vicissitudes of the wilderness journey, whose purpose was to instruct, educate, the people in the duties toward God, **His greatness, His mighty hand, and His stretched-out arm.** Those of the people who had been less than twenty years old when the host reached Kadesh for the first time, and therefore were now between forty and sixty years old, are here addressed; for them the wilderness journey had been a school and a training. V. 3. **And His miracles and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and unto all his land,** v. 4. **and what He did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses and to their chariots; how He made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them,** literally, "over whose faces He let flow the waters of the Red Sea," **as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day,** their redemption from the yoke of Egypt had been perfect; v. 5. **and what He did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place,** all the manifestations of the divine power connected with the wilderness journey; v. 6. **and what He did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben,** in the rebellion of Korah, Num. 16; **how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession,** literally, "all the possession, the property which was at their feet," that is, their slaves and attendants, **in the midst of all Israel;** v. 7. **but your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which He did,** and whose purpose was to train Israel in the fear and in the love of God. V. 8. **Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I,** as the representative of God, **command you this day, that ye may be strong and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it;** for they had need of great spiritual strength for keeping the Lord's precepts and for remaining His people in the Land of Promise; v. 9. **and that ye may prolong your days in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers,** the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, **to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.** Cp. chap. 4, 26; 6, 3. A long and happy life as the reward of faithfulness and obedience is here again made an inducement to the children of Israel, even as temporal blessings are held out before the believers of the New Testament in order to spur them on in their efforts to please the Lord.

THE EXCELLENCIES OF THE LAND OF PROMISE. V. 10. **For the land whither thou goest in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot,** where the need of irrigation made constant toil and watchfulness necessary, **as a garden of herbs,** of vegetables. That the irrigation of Egypt was literally done with the feet may still be seen from the pictures on some of the monuments; for many of the machines used for irrigation were run on the principle of the treadmill, the water thereby being lifted from a lower to a higher level. V. 11. **But the land whither ye go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys,** not a great, flat plain like the valley of the Nile,

and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, the amount of its rainfall being great enough for all purposes of agriculture and horticulture; v. 12. **a land which the Lord, thy God, careth for,** over which He watches and is concerned with anxious care; **the eyes of the Lord, thy God, are always upon it,** His tender solicitude never abates, **from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.** V. 13. **And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord, your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul,** chap. 10, 12, v. 14. **that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season,** when it would come in just right for the benefit of the crops, **the first rain,** after the seeding, from October to December, **and the latter rain,** before the harvest, in March and April, **that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil,** an abundant harvest of all the products of the soil. V. 15. **And I will send,** as a gift of His rich bounty, **grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full;** stock-raising would also be profitable. V. 16. **Take heed to yourselves,** watch carefully over your hearts and minds, **that your heart be not deceived,** namely, by standing open and foolishly inviting enticement of various kinds, **and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them,** chap. 5, 29; 7, 4; 6, 14; v. 17. **and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you,** in consequence of the famine and the epidemics which usually accompany such a visitation, 1 Kings 8, 35; 2 Chron. 6, 26. These same facts hold true also in our days, in spite of all the attempts of men to deny the Lord's interposition.

OBEDIENCE ENJOINED. — V. 18. **Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul,** stamp them indelibly on both reason and will, **and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes,** v. 19. **and ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up.** V. 20. **And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house and upon thy gates.** Cp. chap. 6, 6—9. This passage is an excellent summary of hints for the bringing up of children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, namely, through the constant use and application of the Word of God. V. 21. **That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children,** this blessing being again made prominent, **in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth,** that is, as long as the heaven, with its rich blessings, stands over the earth, so long shall Israel, if faithful to the Lord and His covenant, enjoy the riches of Canaan. V. 22. **For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord, your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him,** chap. 10, 20; v. 23. **then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you,** chap. 4, 38, **and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves,** that is, enter into their possessions, inherit their land. V. 24. **Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours; from the wilderness,** namely, that of Arabia in the south and southeast, **and Lebanon,** in the north, **from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be,** extending to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. V. 25. **There shall no man be able to stand before you; for the Lord, your God, shall lay the fear of you,** chap. 2, 25, **and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon,** into the hearts of all the inhabitants of these countries, **as He hath said unto you,** chap. 7, 24; Ex. 23, 27. All these promises were intended for the purpose of filling the Israelites with good cheer and courage, of strengthening their trust in the Lord.

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE. — V. 26. **Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse,** having told them what the result of obedience and of disobedience would be, he gives them their own choice, he wants them to make their own decision; v. 27. **a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command you this day,** chap. 4, 1; v. 28. **and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, but turn aside out of** (deliberately leave) **the way which I command you this day to go after other gods which ye have not known.** Disobedience of God is a species of idolatry and invariably leads to other sins of idolatry, other transgressions of the First Commandment. V. 29. **And it shall come to pass, when the Lord, thy God, hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim and the curse upon Mount Ebal.** By pronouncing the Lord's blessing and curse while standing on these two mountains, the children of Israel would charge the very land with carrying out the blessing and the curse of the Lord. The land would thereby be placed under the solemn obligation of carrying out Jehovah's decrees. V. 30. **Are they,** the two mountains, **not on the other side,** the west side, **Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the**

champaign, in the great steppes, over against Gilgal, from which the mountains, the plains, and the sea were visible, beside the Plains of Moreh? near the groves of terebinths where the patriarchs had lived, Gen. 12, 6; 35, 4. The two mountains are almost in the center of what was later Samaria, Ebal being on the north, and Gerizim on the south, of a fertile valley, where the city of Shechem was situated. V. 31. **For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the Lord, your God, giveth you, and ye shall possess it and dwell therein.** This definite assurance was to encourage them in the struggles which were before them. V. 32. **And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.** The remembrance of all the mercies of the Lord in the past and the certainty of receiving still more evidences of His loving-kindness in the future should serve as a steady inducement to all Christians to continue in sanctification according to His will.

CHAPTER 12.

Various Precepts to be Observed in Canaan.

CONCERNING THE PLACE OF WORSHIP AND SACRIFICES. — V. 1. **These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth,** chap. 4, 10. The ordinances now following are intended to govern the ecclesiastical and the civil life of Israel in the land of Canaan. V. 2. **Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess,** whose land they would make their own by conquest, **served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills,** for the idea was that the worshipers were nearer to the Deity at these places, **and under every green tree,** for the heathen loved groves, whose mysterious shadows furnished them the religious thrill which they felt to be essential; v. 3. **and ye shall overthrow,** tear down, **their altars,** upon which the sacrifices of idolatry were made, **and break their pillars,** the statues of their idols, **and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images,** demolish the pictures carved from wood, **of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place,** the very names which reminded them of the former idolatrous practises should be abolished. V. 4. **Ye shall not do so unto the Lord, your God,** that is, not select any place that pleased their fancy for His worship. V. 5. **But unto the place which the Lord, your God, shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come,** the Sanctuary where He would reveal His presence in the midst of His people; v. 6. **and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave-offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks,** as it had been prescribed by the Lord in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, Lev. 17, 8; Ex. 10, 25; Num. 15, 3; v. 7. **and there ye shall eat before the Lord, your God,** especially the sacrificial meals connected with peace-offerings, **and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto,** Lev. 23, 40, **ye and your households, wherein the Lord, thy God, hath blessed thee.** "The author takes for granted here that his hearers were familiar with what had been said by him in the earlier parts of his work, and what had become a usage among them, and does not repeat it." V. 8. **Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day,** for in the wilderness the regularity of an ordered existence was impossible, for which reason many of the most sacred rites, such as that of circumcision, were not practised, **every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes,** he acted according to his individual understanding of the Law, applying it to the extent he thought possible in the conditions under which he lived. V. 9. **For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance,** to the Land of Promise, where they would be able to live in peace and security, **which the Lord, your God, giveth you.** The Lord implied that He expected every Israelite to follow the objective rule of the divine Law just as soon as the people would occupy their inheritance in Canaan. V. 10. **But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord, your God, giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety,** v. 11. **then there shall be a place which the Lord, your God, shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord;** because the offerings which were made to the Lord as the result of vows were distinguished for excellence; v. 12. **and ye shall rejoice before the Lord, your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates,** who was to be invited to such sacrificial meals, **forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you,** chap. 10, 9; 14, 29. V. 13. **Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest,** which might just happen to strike the worshiper's fancy; v. 14. **but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy**

tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee, everything connected with the cultus, with the external worship of Jehovah. V. 15. **Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after,** or, wherever they might choose, **according to the blessing of the Lord, thy God, which He hath given thee,** as His rich bounty has provided; **the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck and as of the hart.** This precept superseded and annulled the ordinance which had been observed in the wilderness, where all animals that were to be slaughtered had to be brought to the door of the Tabernacle, Lev. 17, 3—6. V. 16. **Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.** Cp. Gen. 9, 4; Lev. 7, 26; 17, 10. The Lord thus changed the provisions of the Civil or Ceremonial Law to suit the needs and circumstances, whereas the ordinances of the Moral Law are in force for all time.

CONCERNING THE CARE OF THE LEVITES, THE EATING OF SACRIFICIAL MEAT, AND IDOLATRY. V. 17. **Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy free-will offerings, or heave-offering of thine hand,** whatever was taken from the possession of the Israelites as a gift to Jehovah; all these could not be consumed in the worshiper's house or in his home town; v. 18. **but thou must eat them before the Lord, thy God, in the place which the Lord, thy God, shall choose,** the central Sanctuary, **thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates; and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord, thy God, in all that thou puttest thine hands unto,** in any offering that might be made. V. 19. **Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth,** literally, "all thy days upon thy land," chap. 14, 27; Neh. 13, 10. V. 20. **When the Lord, thy God, shall enlarge thy border, as He hath promised thee,** Ex. 34, 24. **and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh,** literally, "because the desire of thy soul is set upon eating flesh," indicating a very great, an overwhelming longing, **thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after,** or, wherever they would choose. V. 21. **If the place which the Lord, thy God, hath chosen to put His name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock which the Lord hath given thee, as I have commanded thee; and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.** V. 22. **Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten,** namely, not in the form of sacrifices, **so thou shalt eat them; the** (Levitically) **unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike.** V. 23. **Only be sure that thou eat not the blood,** they were to be strong enough to resist the temptation to use blood as food; **for the blood is the life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh,** Lev. 17, 11. 14. V. 24. **Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water.** V. 25. **Thou shalt not eat it, that it may go well with thee and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord,** Ex. 15, 26. V. 26. **Only thy holy things which thou hast,** those consecrated to the Lord, **and thy vows, thou shalt take and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose;** v. 27. **and thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the Lord, thy God; and the blood of the sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the Lord, thy God,** as the Law provided, Lev. 1, 5, **and thou shalt eat the flesh,** Lev. 7. V. 28. **Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee and with thy children after thee forever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord, thy God.** V. 29. **When the Lord, thy God, shall cut off,** eradicate, **the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them,** by taking over their country, **and dwellest in their land,** v. 30. **take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, fall into the same snare of idolatry which caused their downfall, after that they be destroyed from before thee, for that judgment of the Lord should deter them from a similar foolhardy course; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise.** They should not even inquire about the form of worship used by the heathen, lest they be tempted to try it for themselves. V. 31. **Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord, thy God,** not try to serve Him with a form of worship modeled after that of the heathen nations; **for every abomination to the Lord which He hateth have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods,** as the Moabites did in their service of Molech. It is a dangerous matter to Christianize heathen customs, for the superstition will cling to the rites after the Christian veneer is forgotten, as in many Christmas customs. V. 32. **What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it,** Josh. 1, 7. The revelation of Scripture is sufficient for all purposes and teaches the way of salvation in a perfect manner. All books of modern antichristian sects which purport to be keys to the Bible are inventions of the Evil One.

CHAPTER 13.

Warning against False Prophets and Other Seducers.

OF FALSE PROPHETS IN GENERAL. — V. 1. **If there arise among you,** in your midst, **a prophet,** one pretending to be sent by the Lord, **or a dreamer of dreams,** (the latter were mediums through which the Lord had promised to make known His will, Num. 12, 6), **and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,** for the servants of Satan, with God's permission, are also able to show great signs and wonders, Matt. 24, 24, v. 2. **and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee,** since the power of Satan is very great, **saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;** that is invariably the purpose connected with the signs and wonders as they are performed by the false teachers, also the healers of our day, no matter to what extent they are genuine, namely, to lead men away from the true God, into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; v. 3. **thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord, your God, proveth you,** He uses the temptation of the false teachers to test the genuineness of the believers' faith, **to know whether ye love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.** No matter, then, how strongly convincing the miracles of the false prophets are or seem to be, the Word of the Lord, which had been received by them and confirmed by the signs of Jehovah, should remain their one standard and criterion, from which they should not deviate. V. 4. **Ye shall walk after the Lord, your God,** follow Him alone, in trustful obedience, **and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice,** as it was definitely transmitted to them in the words of Moses, **and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him,** cling firmly to the sure revelation of His will, and make that the standard according to which all preaching in their midst should be examined and tested, also that of the true prophets, chap. 18, 21. 22. V. 5. **And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams,** he who made use of signs and wonders to tempt the people to idolatry, **shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord, your God,** his words and actions having the aim of stirring up rebellion against the true God, **which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord, thy God, commanded thee to walk in.** That is what the efforts of the false teachers usually culminate in: those that listen to their seductive words are suddenly, and almost forcibly, pushed off the right road and placed on the path which leads to destruction. **So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.** Christians will heed the warning of the Savior to beware of false prophets and will not even be shaken in their faith by the apparently great signs and wonders which they show in our days.

SEDUCERS AMONG RELATIVES. — V. 6. **If thy brother, the son of thy mother,** one with whom a person is connected by the ties of the most intimate relationship, **or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom,** the very nearest relative, **or thy friend which is as thine own soul,** with whom one shares secrets unknown even to the very nearest kinsman, Prov. 17, 17; 18, 24, **entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers;** v. 7. **namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth,** whether the idols were those of their heathen neighbors or such as were worshiped by heathen in the remote places of the world; v. 8. **thou shalt not consent unto him nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him,** the accumulation of synonyms serving to emphasize the greater duty toward God, one which exceeded that of any obligation toward any human being; v. 9. **but thou shalt surely kill him,** immediately take the steps which were necessary to bring the Lord's punishment upon him; **thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death,** as accuser, witness, and even first avenger, **and afterwards the hand of all the people.** V. 10. **And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die, because He hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord, thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage,** from the place where they were bondmen, serfs, and slaves. V. 11. **And all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you;** the severity of the punishment as meted out to the seducer should serve to keep them from indulging in similar attempts and, in so far at least, cause the Law to be observed. So far as the Christians are concerned, it is the will of God that they separate themselves from every open idolater and sinner who seduces others, by excommunicating him. Here the ties of even the closest relationship must be set aside in the interest of God's honor, 1 Cor. 5, 11. 13.

SEDUCERS AMONG FELLOW-CITIZENS. — V. 12. **If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities which the Lord, thy God, hath given thee to dwell there, saying,** v. 13. **Certain men, the children of Belial,** literally, "sons of worthlessness," vain, profitless people, **are gone out from among you,** denying their allegiance to the people of God and their obligations to the Lord, **and have withdrawn** (seduced) **the in-**

habitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which ye have not known, if this rumor or report should reach the ears of any member of Israel, v. 14. **then shalt thou enquire,** make an investigation through the proper officers, **and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth and the thing certain, that such an abomination is wrought among you,** if the guilt of the people is established beyond a doubt, v. 15. **thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly,** as having fallen under the ban of Jehovah, chap. 7, **and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.** The ban should be carried out upon such a city with a severity which would cause the complete extermination of all living things. V. 16. **And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it,** in the form of dresses, furniture, jewelry, and the like, **in the midst of the street thereof,** the broad, open place just inside the gate, **and shalt burn with fire the city and all the spoil thereof, every whit, for the Lord, thy God,** namely, as being devoted to Him through this destruction; **and it shall be an heap forever; it shall not be built again.** V. 17. **And there shall cleave naught of the cursed thing to thine hand,** no individual should presume to keep any of the material found among the spoil, **that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger, and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee,** not visit the sin of that one city upon the entire nation, **and multiply thee, as He hath sworn unto thy fathers,** Gen. 22, 17; v. 18. **when thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord, thy God, to keep all His commandments which I command thee this day,** including these, which enjoined the utmost severity upon the false prophets and seducers of every kind, **to do that which is right in the eyes of the Lord, thy God.** The command of God, as it concerns Christian congregations in our days, plainly states that they must have no fellowship with unbelievers and with false believers. Only in this way is it possible to hinder the corruption and the defection of the people of God. Cp. 2 Cor. 6, 14—18.

CHAPTER 14.

Precepts Concerning Unclean Beasts and Tithing.

Of Unclean Beasts. — V. 1. **Ye are the children of the Lord, your God,** and this relation toward the covenant God made them a people of property, of God's possession, a peculiar people; **ye shall not cut yourselves,** make incisions in the flesh, **nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead,** as a sign of mourning, Lev. 19, 28. V. 2. **For thou art an holy people unto the Lord, thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.** For this reason the entire life of the people was to be governed by the obedience, veneration, and childlike confidence which God expected of them and which was to show itself even in the matters of every-day life. V. 3. **Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing,** namely, such things as He loathed because they offended His holiness. This section is mainly a repetition of Lev. 11. V. 4. **These are the beasts which ye shall eat,** which would not bring Levitical uncleanness upon them: **the ox, the sheep, and the goat,** v. 5. **the hart,** the common deer of Palestine, **and the roebuck,** or antelope, **and the fallow deer,** a sort of mountain sheep, **and the wild goat,** a species of gazelle, **and the pygarg,** a small gazelle, **and the wild ox, and the chamois,** a species of deer of the mountains. V. 6. **And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws,** distinct from the front to the rear, **and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat,** whether true ruminants or not. V. 7. **Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof: as the camel,** the rear of whose padded foot is an undivided, yielding ball, **and the hare, and the coney,** Lev. 11, 5. 6; **for they chew the cud,** make the movements characteristic of ruminating, **but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you.** V. 8. **And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their dead carcass,** Lev. 11, 26. 27. V. 9. **These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat,** such animals as are commonly regarded as true fish; v. 10. **and whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you.** V. 11. **Of all clean birds ye shall eat.** V. 12. **But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey,** v. 13. **and the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind,** v. 14. **and every raven after his kind,** v. 15. **and the owl,** or rather, the ostrich, **and the night-hawk, and the cuckoo,** a species of gull, **and the hawk after his kind,** v. 16. **the little owl, and the great owl,** or the ibis, **and the swan,** or rather, a species of owl, v. 17. **and the pelican, and the gier eagle, and the cormorant,** v. 18. **and the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.** Cp. Lev. 11, 13—19. The list includes such birds

and flying animals, as either tear their prey to pieces or feed on carrion and offal. V. 19. **And every creeping thing that flieth,** reptiles and insects, with the exception of the locusts mentioned Lev. 11, 21. 22, **is unclean unto you; they shall not be eaten.** V. 20. **But of all clean fowls ye may eat.** V. 21. **Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself,** a beast that dies of some sickness or accident; **thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates that he may eat it,** he could use it for food, if he chose; **or thou mayest sell it unto an alien,** a person not a member of Israel; **for thou art an holy people unto the Lord, thy God,** wherefore they should abstain from all foods which the Lord loathed. **Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk,** Ex. 23, 19; 34, 26. The distinction between foods is no longer a matter of God's command, Acts 10, 15, but His warning against every form of spiritual contamination is just as strict as ever, 1 Thess. 4, 4.

OF TITHING. — V. 22. **Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year,** set aside the tenth part of the income for the use of Jehovah. V. 23. **And thou shalt eat before the Lord, thy God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there,** the central Sanctuary which He intended to select in Canaan, **the tithe of thy corn,** that is, of grain in general, **of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks,** chap. 12, 5—7, **that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord, thy God, always.** The fear of the Lord does not only include the feeling of utter dependence upon Him, but includes also the idea of piety, and Israel, with the proper reverence, was to rejoice in the fellowship of the covenant God. V. 24. **And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it,** namely, the tithe of the field and orchard, of the herd and of the flock, **or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord, thy God, shall choose to set His name there, when the Lord, thy God, hath blessed thee,** for it happened later that some Israelites lived more than a week's journey from Shiloh, from the heights of Gibeon, and from Jerusalem, v. 25. **then shalt thou turn it,** the gift of the tenth, **into money,** by selling it or by taking its equivalent in cash, **and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord, thy God, shall choose;** v. 26. **and thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after,** that is, buy for that silver whatever sacrificial animal or offering he might want, **for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth,** whatever it might request of the person for the offering which it had determined to bring; **and thou shalt eat there before the Lord, thy God,** chap. 12, 7. 18, **and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household,** v. 27. **and the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him,** chap. 12, 12. 18. 19; **for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,** Num. 18, 20, and should therefore be given special consideration by the members of the Jewish Church. V. 28. **At the end of three years,** after the harvest of every third year, **thou shalt bring forth,** namely, out of the granaries and bins, **all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates,** in storehouses provided for that purpose in the cities; v. 29. **and the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee) and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow which are within thy gates shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied,** for once have their fill to eat and to drink; **that the Lord, thy God, may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest,** as a reward for this cheerful care of the poor, as it flowed out of true charity. Twice within the cycle of the Sabbatic year the tenth of the increase was thus set aside for the poor and needy, and four times it was taken to the Sanctuary of Jehovah. If the Lord blesses a Christian in his labor, the latter should not forget those that are less fortunate, lest the Lord withdraw His blessing in anger.

CHAPTER 15.

Concerning the Poor and Servants.

OF THE TREATMENT OF THE POOR. — V. 1. **At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.** At the end of every Sabbatic year, after the close of the harvest season, when the accounts were cast up, every creditor was to remember that leniency was expected of him. V. 2. **And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor,** literally, "every lord or maker of a loan," **that lendeth aught unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor or of his brother, because it is called the Lord's release.** Cp. Ex. 23, 10. 11; Lev. 25, 2—7. This does not imply that the debt was simply to be canceled, but that the creditor was not to insist upon its immediate payment in a harsh and legalistic spirit. V. 3. **Of a foreigner, a non-Israelite, thou mayest exact it again,** in his case payment could be demanded, because he was not bound by the law which forbade the cultivation of the soil in the seventh year, and was therefore supposed to be in a position to pay, since he had had his usual income; **but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release,** of him the return of the

loan should not be exacted, v. 4. **save when there shall be no poor among you,** literally, "in order that by no means there be among you needy ones," namely, due to the oppression of the poorer ones, as here intimated; **for the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it,** and therefore no creditor would need to fear want on account of the humaneness practised by him; v. 5. **only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, to observe all these commandments which I command thee this day,** for obedience to God flowing out of true faith must be at the basis of all holy life. V. 6. **For the Lord, thy God, blesseth thee** as He promised thee, His blessing was not problematic and uncertain, but had begun even at this time, for the conquest of the land east of the Jordan was a guarantee of the final complete victory; **and thou shalt lend unto many nations,** let people of other nations have money upon security, **but thou shalt not borrow,** none of their nation would be obliged to bind himself by a pledge given as security for a loan; **and thou shalt reign over many nations,** have a position of superiority due to this economic independence, **but they shall not reign over thee.** V. 7. **If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee,** the entire context emphasizing the relation of intimacy which should exist between all the members of the nation, **thou shalt not harden thine heart,** draw it together with every evidence of coldness, **nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother;** v. 8. **but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him,** show a cordial generosity, **and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth,** to the extent in which he is in need. V. 9. **Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart,** that the worthless heart should speak to the person, **saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,** in which the loan might not be returned; **and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother,** be filled with ill will and grudge against him, **and thou givest him naught; and he cry unto the Lord against thee,** complaining of this lack of brotherly love, **and it be sin unto thee** and challenge the wrath of Jehovah. V. 10. **Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him,** be filled with ill will and resentment against the poorer neighbor, **because that for this thing the Lord, thy God, shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.** Jehovah's purpose in doing so was to enable every person to practise charity in the right spirit and in a liberal manner. V. 11. **For the poor shall never cease out of the land,** Matt. 26, 11; **therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land.** Note that he stresses the personal responsibility and obligation of every person toward the members of his people. The obligation of the Christians in this respect is stated very plainly by St. Paul: "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. 6, 9. 10.

THE RELEASE OF HEBREW SERVANTS. — V. 12. **And if thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.** Ex. 21, 2—6. This was a form of serfdom, rather than slavery, brought about by such a condition of poverty as to oblige a person to sell his services to his neighbor in order to live. V. 13. **And when thou sendest him out free from thee,** having given him his liberty in the seventh year as God commanded, **thou shalt not let him go away empty;** v. 14. **thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock and out of thy floor,** of the grain of the threshing-floor, **and out of thy winepress; of that wherewith the Lord, thy God, hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him,** lay it upon him in rich measure, as the opening words say. V. 15. **And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord, thy God, redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing to-day.** The continual remembrance of the redemption out of the house of bondage was to produce in every Israelite a disposition to practise kindness and liberality. V. 16. **And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee, because he loveth thee and thine house,** the entire household, including, perhaps, his own family, **because he is well with thee,** being fully satisfied to stay with his master, v. 17. **then thou shalt take an awl and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise.** Cp. Ex. 21, 5. 6. This covered all the cases in which freedom might have been a hardship to the servant concerned, because the latter might have been unable to find employment elsewhere and would therefore once more have been reduced to extreme poverty. V. 18. **It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee,** in case the servant desires his freedom; **for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee,** for that was the result of his position in the household, where he was available for work at any time, day or night, **in serving thee six years; and the Lord, thy God, shall bless thee in all that thou doest,** as a reward for the kindness shown.

OF THE FIRSTLINGS. — V. 19. **All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of**

thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord, thy God, as a sacrifice or its equivalent; **thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep,** use the animals consecrated to Jehovah for earthly purposes. V. 20. **Thou shalt eat it before the Lord, thy God, year by year, in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household,** as a sacrificial meal. Cp. chap. 12, 5—7; Ex. 13, 2; 34, 19. V. 21. **And if there be any blemish therein, as, if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, if it is not physically perfect, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord, thy God,** in order not to profane the sacred meals. V. 22. **Thou shalt eat it within thy gates,** every Israelite in his own city; **the** (Levitically) **unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike, as the roebuck and as the hart,** which were not sacrificial animals, but could be used for food, chap. 12, 15. 21. 22. V. 23. **Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water,** chap. 12, 16. 23. 24. They were to be holy, undefiled, as the people consecrated to the Lord, a fact which is true also with regard to the spiritual condition of the Christians, who also are a chosen generation, 1 Pet. 2, 9.

CHAPTER 16.

The Great Festivals of the Jews.

OF THE PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. — V. 1. **Observe the month of Abib,** the first month of the church-year, **and keep the Passover unto the Lord, thy God,** on the fourteenth of the month; **for in the month of Abib the Lord, thy God, brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.** Cp. Ex. 12; Lev. 23; Num. 9. V. 2. **Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto the Lord, thy God, of the flock and the herd,** for the offerings of the entire week, especially those of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, are here included, **in the place which the Lord shall choose to place His name there,** where the central Sanctuary would be erected. V. 3. **Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it,** Ex. 12, 15; **seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction,** to remind the people of the oppression which they suffered in Egypt and of the suddenness of the delivery; **for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste,** the Egyptians almost thrusting them forth, Ex. 12, 39; **that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.** V. 4. **And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast,** in the entire country, to its utmost boundaries, **seven days,** as long as the double festival lasted; **neither shall there anything of the flesh which thou sacrificedst the first day at even,** the Passover sacrifice proper, **remain all night until the morning,** Ex. 12, 10; 34, 25. V. 5. **Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates,** in any city of the land of Canaan where the worshipers happened to live, **which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee;** v. 6. **but at the place which the Lord, thy God, shall choose to place His name in,** where the Sanctuary of the entire nation would be erected, **there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun,** when night was coming on, Ex. 12, 6, **at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt,** at that exact time of the year. V. 7. **And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord, thy God, shall choose; and thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tents,** the standing expression for centuries for going home. V. 8. **Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord, thy God,** Lev. 23, 36, a high festival day on which all work was forbidden; **thou shalt do no work therein.** Note that even here the two festivals are considered practically as one, also that the ordinances as originally given were modified, for the entire Passover celebration took place at the central Sanctuary, and the individual houses were no longer regarded as the places of sacrifice, nor was the blood used to paint the door-posts, as in Egypt.

OF PENTECOST. — V. 9. **Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee,** namely, from the sixteenth of Abib, or Nisan, Lev. 23, 15; **begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn,** which was done on the sixteenth of Nisan, when the first-fruits of barley were offered to the Lord. V. 10. **And thou shalt keep the Feast of Weeks,** or Pentecost, **unto the Lord, thy God, with a tribute,** or measure, **of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord, thy God, according as the Lord, thy God, hath blessed thee,** the offering thus being as rich as the worshiper desired, in proportion to the blessing which he had received at the Lord's hand, Ex. 23, 15; 34, 20; v. 11. **and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord, thy God,** chap. 12, 7. 12. 18, **thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are among you, in the place which the Lord, thy God, hath chosen to place His name there.** Though only a one-day festival, Pentecost was celebrated with great joy, and the needs of the poor

and forsaken were particularly stressed. V. 12. **And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt; and thou shalt observe and do these statutes,** always spurred on in these efforts by the remembrance of the wonderful redemption from the serfdom of Egypt. Note that only that side of the festival is here touched upon which concerned the Israelite personally, the public sacrifices being described Num. 28 and 29.

Of the Feast of Tabernacles. — V. 13. **Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days,** Ex. 23, 16; Lev. 23, 34; Num. 29, 12, **after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine,** all the products of the threshing-floor and of the wine-press; v. 14. **and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are within thy gates,** all of whom should be remembered upon such a happy occasion. V. 15. **Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord, thy God,** Lev. 23, 39, **in the place which the Lord shall choose; because the Lord, thy God, shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.** V. 16. **Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord, thy God, in the place which He shall choose,** Ex. 23, 17; 34, 23, but this precept did not exclude the women, 1 Sam. 1, 3—5; Luke 2, 41: **in the Feast of Unleavened Bread and in the Feast of Weeks and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before the Lord empty;** v. 17. **every man shall give as he is able,** as much as he finds that he can possibly afford to give, **according to the blessing of the Lord, thy God, which He hath given thee,** in the form of voluntary offerings. Three points deserve to be noted here, namely, that all men appeared at these great festivals, and that they did not leave their families at home if they could arrange to bring them along, that the rejoicing was over the wonderful deeds of the Lord, and that they brought voluntary gifts, as the Lord had prospered them. These three points deserve to be kept in mind by all Christians.

Precepts of Right Judgment. — V. 18. **Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates,** in all cities and towns, **which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, throughout thy tribes,** chap. 1, 12—18. So the judges were to have assistants, not only for clerical work, but also as counselors and as keepers of the genealogical records; **and they shall judge the people with just judgment,** with a strict regard for righteousness and justice. V. 19. **Thou shalt not wrest judgment,** stretch the right, turn it aside from the right path, Ex. 23, 2. 6. 8. **Thou shalt not respect persons,** either out of deference to a powerful person or out of sympathy with a needy man, **neither take a gift,** a bribe; **for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise and pervert the words of the righteous,** corrupt the good cases of those that are in the right. V. 20. **That which is altogether just shalt thou follow,** pursuing justice, and justice only, **that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.** Some bad transgressions that might come to the attention of the authorities are now named. V. 21. **Thou shalt not plant thee a grove,** erect a wooden pillar which was used in the worship of Asherah, a heathen goddess, **of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord, thy God, which thou shalt make thee.** V. 22. **Neither shalt thou set thee up any image,** statue or pillar, such as were erected in honor of Baal, Ex. 23, 34; **which the Lord, thy God, hateth.** The constant repetition of the same precept serves the same purpose as our daily examination for the purpose of cleansing our lives and of growing in sanctification.

CHAPTER 17.

Instructions Regarding Judgments and the Office of a King.

Punishment of Idolatry. — V. 1. **Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord, thy God, any bullock or sheep wherein is blemish, or any evil-favoredness; for that is an abomination unto the Lord, thy God.** The offering of an imperfect animal as sacrifice, one infected with any of the evils mentioned Lev. 22, 20—24, is just as much an insult to Jehovah as the erecting of pillars to Asherah and Baal; hence the authorities were to watch carefully over these matters. V. 2. **If there be found among you, within any of thy gates,** in any city, that is, anywhere in the entire country, **which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord, thy God, in transgressing His covenant,** in setting aside any of the fundamental terms of the alliance which was in force between Jehovah and His people, v. 3. **and hath gone and served other gods, and worshiped them,** thus overthrowing the basic precept of the covenant Law, **either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven,** the worship which was the curse of the heathen nations, chap. 4, 19, **which I have not commanded;** v. 4. **and it be told thee,** announcement being made to the proper authorities, **and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently,** made a most careful investigation, **and, behold, it be true,**

and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, chap. 13, 12—14, v. 5. **then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman which have committed that wicked thing unto thy gates,** to the open space within the city gates where court was held, **even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones till they die.** The execution was made outside the gates of the city, Lev. 24, 14; Num. 15, 36; Acts 7, 58; Heb. 13, 12. V. 6. **At the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses,** that is, on the basis of their testimony, **shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death,** Num. 35, 30. Cp. Matt. 18, 16; 2 Cor. 13, 1; 1 Tim. 5, 19. V. 7. **The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death,** chap. 13, 9, in order thus openly to manifest their firm conviction of the guilt of the accused, **and afterward the hands of all the people,** for the transgression was one affecting the entire nation. **So thou shalt put the evil away from among you,** chap. 13, 5. The same holy zeal should be found in every Christian congregation in putting flagrant sinners out of their midst.

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS TO BE DECIDED BY THE PRIEST. — V. 8. **If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment,** one beyond the ability of the ordinary judge or officer to decide, **between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke,** where the legal enactments concerning a bodily injury, Ex. 21, 12 ff., concerning civil cases, and concerning quarrels are not clear enough for the officers before whom the matter is brought, **being matters of controversy within thy gates, then shalt thou arise,** namely, the men in authority in the individual cities or towns, **and get thee up into the place which the Lord, thy God, shall choose,** for there would always be priests on duty at the central Sanctuary; v. 9. **and thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites,** the children of Levi, **and unto the judge that shall be in those days,** a sort of chief justice by the side of the high priest, **and enquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment,** interpret the law which would find its application in that case, if necessary, after consulting the Lord directly, 1 Sam. 28, 6; v. 10. **and thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee,** the priests here coming into consideration as teachers of the Law; v. 11. **according to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do,** conform exactly to the decision of the supreme court; **thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand nor to the left,** since the decision would rest upon the Law of Jehovah, with which the priests were to have a perfect acquaintance. V. 12. **And the man that will do presumptuously,** act with haughty insolence, **and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord, thy God,** acting as mediator between Jehovah and His worshipers whenever a sacrifice was made, **or unto the judge, even that man shall die,** for the rebellious behavior was in reality an offense against God, in whose name judgment had been given; **and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.** V. 13. **And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously,** be deterred from choosing a similar insolent course. Christian pastors should remember that it is their duty to teach their congregation the Word of God, to make Holy Writ both the norm of doctrine and the rule of life.

OF THE OFFICE OF AN EVENTUAL KING. — V. 14. **When thou art come unto the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me,** a thing which actually came to pass afterward, 1 Sam. 8, 5, v. 15. **thou shalt in any wise,** by all means, **set him king over thee whom the Lord, thy God, shall choose,** 1 Sam. 9, 15; **one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.** The ideal which God had in mind for Israel was a theocracy, a direct government of the people by the Lord; but He was willing to modify that to the extent of letting a man chosen by Him, from among the children of Israel, be king as His representative. V. 16. **But he shall not multiply horses to himself,** make their raising his special avocation or even vocation, **nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses,** for the Egyptian lowlands were much better fitted for the rearing of horses than the mountainous Palestine; **forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way,** chap. 28, 68. V. 17. **Neither shall he** (the king) **multiply wives to himself,** after the manner of the luxury-loving, voluptuous Oriental monarchs, **that his heart turn not away,** as that of Solomon in after-years, when his wives seduced him to idolatry, 1 Kings 11, 3. 4; **neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold,** another dangerous practise of the Oriental kings. V. 18. **And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom,** having reached the summit of human greatness, where everything would be moving according to his will, **that he shall write him a copy of this Law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites,** made for him by the priests of the tribe of Levi; v. 19. **and it shall be with him, and he shall read**

therein all the days of his life, thus keeping the will of the Most High before him, as his aim and standard, **that he may learn to fear the Lord, his God, to keep all the words of this Law and these statutes, to do them,** bound by the laws and institutions of the Lord and of the nation which was God's covenant people; v. 20. **that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren,** in unwarranted pride and haughtiness, **and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left,** making it his aim at all times to adhere to the Law of God, a copy of which was in his possession, with the utmost strictness; **to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel;** for the Lord rewards obedience to His Law with earthly blessings. We Christians pray for our government and for all those that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. 2, 2.

CHAPTER 18.

Of the Priestly and Prophetic Office.

The Dues of Priests and Levites. — V. 1. **The priests, the Levites,** the sons of the tribe of Levi, **and all the tribe of Levi,** the ministers known as the Levites proper, **shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel,** Num. 18, 20; **they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire,** Num. 18, 8. 9, **and His inheritance.** V. 2. **Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as He hath said unto them.** The inheritance of Jehovah, which was to be the reward of the priests and Levites, consisted not only in the wave-breast and heave-shoulder of the sacrifices, as specified in the precepts of the sacrifices, but in all the gifts devoted to the Lord, also tithes and firstlings. V. 3. **And this shall be the priest's due from the people,** that which he had a right to expect and demand, **from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder,** Num. 6, 19, **and the two cheeks, and the maw,** the *abomasum,* the fourth, or true digestive stomach of ruminants, these three parts being considered great delicacies. V. 4. **The first-fruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil,** Ex. 22, 29; Num. 18, 12. 24, **and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give him;** that was the priest's portion. V. 5. **For the Lord, thy God, hath chosen him out of all thy tribes to stand to minister in the name of the Lord,** chap. 10, 8; Ex. 28, 1, **him and his sons forever.** V. 6. **And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel,** from any of the cities which were set aside for the Levites, **where he sojourned,** Num. 35, 2. 3, **and come with all the desire of his mind,** with all eagerness to share in the ministry of worship, **unto the place which the Lord shall choose,** the central Sanctuary, v. 7. **then he shall minister in the name of the Lord, his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the Lord.** It seems that only a part of the Levites was actively engaged in the ministry of the Sanctuary, probably because their ministry was regulated by courses. The men here spoken of were not on duty, not under obligation to be present at the Sanctuary, but were simply zealous to be active. V. 8. **They shall have like portions to eat,** as much as those who were on duty by selection, **beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony,** that is, regardless of the income he may have from the sale of goods inherited from his father. The meadow-land belonging to the Levites could not be sold, but they had the right either to sell or to rent a house belonging to them. The precept of the New Testament which corresponds to this order is that which establishes the rule that "they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

Warning against Heathen Abominations. V. 9. **When thou art come into the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations,** those customs which the Lord particularly abhorred and loathed. V. 10. **There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire,** as the worshipers of Moloch, or Molech, did, **or that useth divination,** to uncover the future, Num. 23, 23, **or an observer of times,** a whispering magician, Lev. 19, 26, or an augur who fostered superstition, **or an enchanter,** one who interprets signs, down to the hissing of a serpent, **or a witch,** the ordinary conjurer, v. 11. **or a charmer,** a magician, **or a consulter with familiar spirits,** one who has power over spirits and inquires of them, **or a wizard,** a man with all the wisdom of the occult arts, **or a necromancer,** one who cites the spirits of the dead. All these practises, as they grow out of idolatry, are found to the present day, and the loathing of the Lord has not changed since that time. V. 12. **For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord,** abhorred and cursed of Him, to this day; **and because of these abominations the Lord, thy God, doth drive them out from before thee.** Cp. Lev. 18, 24. 25; 20, 23. V. 13. **Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord, thy God.** The Hebrew text at this point is very emphatic: Sincere, upright, irreproachable shalt thou be before Jehovah, thy God, namely, as a people consecrated to Him and His service. V. 14. **For**

these nations which thou shalt possess, by taking possession of their country, **hearkened unto observers of times,** to conjurers and magicians, **and unto diviners,** and so they will receive their punishment; **but as for thee, the Lord, thy God, hath not suffered thee so to do.** Israel should remain absolutely undefiled by such practises, even as all true believers of all times abhor them from the bottom of their hearts.

OF THE COMING GREAT PROPHET. — V. 15. **The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.** With great abruptness, as it is characteristic of prophecy, Moses here foretells the coming of a great, a singular Prophet. This great Prophet would arise by the special direction of the Lord, sent by Him for a particular purpose. Unto Israel would He come, for the benefit, for the salvation, of the people of the Lord. He would not be a strange, a new creature, not sent from the world of angels or from any other sphere, but would arise from the midst of Israel, a descendant of Israel according to the flesh, a true human being. Like unto Moses this great Prophet would be, and yet exceeding Him in endowments from on high, filled with the Spirit of God without measure, the one final Mediator between God and man. For Him Moses bespeaks full and absolute obedience, to wit, hearing for the purpose of applying the word and acting accordingly. V. 16. **According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord, thy God, in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord, my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not,** Ex. 20, 19. V. 17. **And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.** Moses had even at that time received the revelation concerning this wonderful Prophet who was to bring them a message of glory and beauty instead of that which struck terror to their hearts. V. 18. **I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth,** impart to Him the message which He desired to have delivered to His people; **and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.** His word would be invested with unconditional certainty. V. 19. **And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.** With the greatest emphasis the necessity of yielding unquestioning obedience to this great Prophet and His message is urged. The punishment of the disobedient is contained in the words referring to an account which will be asked, namely, on the Day of Judgment. That this prophecy is a Messianic promise is clear in the light of the New Testament, Luke 9, 35; Acts 3, 22; 7, 37; Heb. 1, 1. 2; it sets forth Jesus Christ as the great Prophet of the New Testament.

OF FALSE PROPHETS. — V. 20. **But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in My name,** with insolent haughtiness, **which I have not commanded him to speak,** whose message therefore is altogether false, **or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die,** be put to death for promulgating falsehoods which took away the honor of the Lord. V. 21. **And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath spoken?** How may any one be sure of the truth, since all the false teachers claim a divine call, a divine mission? The Lord gives the answer. V. 22. **When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken,** the fact that the prophecy is not fulfilled proves it to have been a falsehood, as so many predictions of modern sects regarding the date of the Day of Judgment have been found to be lies, **but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.** If, in addition to this, a person compares the teaching of the false prophets with the plain statements of Holy Writ, he will have an infallible guide to keep him from error, chap. 13, 2 ff. We Christians have our refuge and our salvation in Christ alone, who as the Prophet of God speaks to us in His Word.

CHAPTER 19.

Of the Cities of Refuge and of Witnesses in Court.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE CITIES OF REFUGE. — V. 1. **When the Lord, thy God, hath cut off the nations,** namely, by annihilation, **whose land the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, and thou succeedest them,** by occupying their land as an inheritance, **and dwellest in their cities and in their houses,** v. 2. **thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee to possess it.** The reference is to the land west of Jordan, for the cities in the eastern country had already been designated, chap. 4, 41. 43. The entire passage is not a mere repetition of Num. 35, 9—34, but contains directions for keeping the laws as they were established, with special reference to the future extension of the country. V. 3. **Thou shalt prepare thee a way,** keep the roads to these cities in good condition, the passage of the rivers and creeks

being an item of great importance, **and divide the coasts of thy land, which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee to inherit, into three parts,** namely, with reference to the eventual central location of the cities of refuge, **that every slayer may flee thither,** no distinction being made here between one whose life would be preserved and one who would eventually be condemned as a murderer. V. 4. **And this is the case of the slayer which shall flee thither that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbor ignorantly,** that is, unintentionally, **whom he hated not in time past,** chap. 4, 42, v. 5. **as when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor,** the ax-head just happens to strike the neighbor, **that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities and live,** be in a position to preserve his life, v. 6. **lest the avenger of the blood,** the near relative upon whom this duty devolved, **pursue the slayer while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him,** strike down his soul, take his life; **whereas he was not worthy of death,** could not rightly be condemned to death, **inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.** For this reason it was important that a city of refuge be near at hand in every part of Israel's dominion, and that it be accessible. Note that the people as a whole are addressed throughout the passage, for the Lord wanted to bring out the personal obligation in regard to the intended preservation of life and prevention of bloodshed in Israel. V. 7. **Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee,** set them aside for this special purpose. V. 8. **And if the Lord, thy God, enlarge thy coast** (boundary), **as He hath sworn unto thy fathers,** Gen. 15, 18, **and give thee all the land which He promised to give unto thy fathers,** which included all the country from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River; v. 9. **if thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord, thy God, and to walk ever in His ways,** this being the condition that must be fulfilled before the great territory would be given to the Israelites, **then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three,** thus making a total of nine in the entire region occupied by the Israelites. As a matter of fact, this condition was never fulfilled by the people, and therefore the number of the cities of refuge never exceeded six. Even at the time of David and Solomon, whose power extended from the brook of Egypt and the Elanitic Gulf to the Euphrates, the children of Israel were not actually occupying all this country, many of the conquered nations being merely tributary vassals, who retained their form of government and their national identity; v. 10. **that innocent blood be not shed in thy land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.** This would be the case if the unintentional slayer would not be given sufficient opportunity to save his life from the avenger of the blood, by the setting aside of the needed number of cities of refuge. V. 11. **But if any man hate his neighbor, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die,** strike down his soul, take his life, **and fleeth into one of these cities,** hoping to escape with his life, v. 12. **then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood that he may die,** as it was a clear case of premeditated, malicious murder. V. 13. **Thine eye shall not pity him,** the factor of false sentiment was to be absent entirely, **but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.** Cp. Ex. 21, 12—15; Num. 35, 16 ff. The mawkish sentimentality of our days which has succeeded in abolishing capital punishment for murderers in many States has no support in the Word of God.

PRECEPTS REGARDING WITNESSES. — V. 14. **Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark,** the fence or the posts which indicated the boundary of his property, **which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord, thy God, giveth thee to possess it.** Whatever the heads or chiefs, the first possessors, the fathers, Joshua and the renowned elders, determined, should be observed down to the most distant future. It is clear that this direction was given while the people were not yet in possession of Canaan. V. 15. **One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, guilt, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth,** for a single witness is no witness; **at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses,** according to the testimony of two or three persons, **shall the matter be established.** This rule was to hold not only in case of one on trial for his life, chap. 17, 6, but was to find general application, Num. 35, 30; Matt. 18, 16; 2 Cor. 13, 1; 1 Tim. 5, 19. V. 16. **If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong,** as might happen where only a single witness is available and the charge is a very grave one, literally, one of falling away from the Law of God, especially in a deliberate transgression, a crime, v. 17. **then both the men between whom the controversy is,** the accuser and the accused, **shall stand before the Lord,** at the central Sanctuary, **before the priests and the judges,** chap. 17, 9, **which shall be in those**

days, for these were to be regarded as the representatives of God; v. 18. **and the judges shall make diligent inquisition,** conduct their investigation with painstaking care; **and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother,** spoken lies against him to harm him, perhaps even to the extent of causing him to lose his life, v. 19. **then ye shall do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother,** his evil plans should be executed against himself; **so shalt thou put the evil away from among you,** Ex. 21, 23; Lev. 24, 20. V. 20. **And those which remain shall hear and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you,** chap. 17, 13. V. 21. **And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,** namely, in punishing the false witness. The punishment of a false witness, even to-day, is in the hands of God: "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape," Prov. 19, 5.

CHAPTER 20.

Ordinances about the Waging of War.

THE SELECTION OF SOLDIERS FOR A CAMPAIGN. — V. 1. **When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots,** an equipment which Israel did not possess at that time, and which always made the impression of superior power on the part of the enemy, **and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them,** for the battle would not be to the stronger and more numerous by human calculation; **for the Lord, thy God, is with thee,** as He showed so often in later times, **which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,** thereby showing the extent of His power. V. 2. **And it shall be when ye are come nigh unto the battle,** when they are mobilized for war and drawn up in order, to advance to the battle, **that the priest,** one specially commissioned for that purpose, **shall approach and speak unto the people,** v. 3. **and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies; let not your hearts faint,** be weak and tender, **fear not and do not tremble,** be not stirred up with consternation, **neither be ye terrified because of them,** the expressions purposely being multiplied in order to emphasize the foolishness of fear; v. 4. **for the Lord, your God, is He that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you,** to effect a rescue from all enemies and to insure the victory. V. 5. **And the officers,** the keepers of the genealogical records and of the tribal rolls, whose duty it also was to keep account of the soldiers mustered, **shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.** V. 6. **And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it,** for, by God's command, there could not be a common use of fruit until the fifth year, Lev. 19, 23—25? **Let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.** V. 7. **And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her,** the formal marriage not yet having taken place? **Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.** Independent human life is here recognized in its three beginnings: "house-building as the first foundation; the planting of the vineyard as the first enlargement of the relations of life; the betrothal as the first completion of the independent position in life." The Lord did not want the social and economic order disorganized by war; He did not want to take away from His people the enjoyment of any of the blessings which He had supplied. V. 8. **And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint,** literally, melt, dissolve, **as well as his heart.** A single weak soldier, whom the very thought of going into battle filled with the direst misgivings and with terror, was likely to infect the entire army with his attitude. V. 9. **And it shall be when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people,** men who were to have the actual command in the campaign and during the battles. All this was done under the direction of Jehovah, who always retained supreme command of His host, just as He is the only Ruler and Leader in His Church to the end of time.

MANNER OF DEALING WITH A BESIEGED CITY. V. 10. **When thou,** in the course of a campaign during a war, **comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it,** by inviting the people of the city to submit peacefully, to surrender without resistance. V. 11. **And it shall be, if it, the city, make thee answer of peace,** agree to the conditions as offered, **and open** (its gates) **unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee,** being held in vassalage and obliged to pay tribute, also in personal service, as a return for the sparing of their lives. **The pur-**

pose of this ordinance was, of course, to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. V. 12. **And if it, the city** in question, **will make no peace with thee,** refusing to consider the conditions as proposed, **but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it;** v. 13. **and when the Lord, thy God, hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword,** Num. 31, 7; v. 14. **but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself,** as well-earned booty; **and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies,** use it for the maintenance of life, **which the Lord, thy God, hath given thee.** V. 15. **Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations,** of the people living in Canaan proper. V. 16. **But of the cities of these people which the Lord, thy God, doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth,** neither man nor beast, for it was to be a war of extermination. V. 17. **But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord, thy God, hath commanded thee;** v. 18. **that they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods,** the idolatrous and immoral customs connected with their worship; **so should ye sin against the Lord, your God,** as later history abundantly shows. V. 19. **When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof,** the various trees bearing fruits and nuts, **by forcing an ax against them,** by chopping them down with the customary swinging motion; **for thou mayest eat of them,** their fruit is able to sustain life, **and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life),** he depends upon it for food, **to employ them in the siege,** in the building of breastworks and trenches. The children of Israel were to remember that war should be waged with men only, not with trees whose fruit served for food. They were not to practise vandalism and ruthlessness. V. 20. **Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat,** whose fruit could not be used for food, **thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee until it be subdued,** literally, until it (the walls) falls down from its fortified height and is thus overthrown. With the Lord on their side, the children of Israel were always sure of victory.

CHAPTER 21.

Regulations Chiefly of the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourth Commandments.

THE CASE OF AN UNKNOWN MURDER. — V. 1. **If one be found slain in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee to possess it,** somewhere out in the open, on the soil, **lying in the field,** where the murderer had left or dragged him, **and it be not known who hath slain him,** v. 2. **then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth,** namely, those of the neighboring cities and towns, the elders as the representatives of the congregation, and the judges as the exponents of law and order, **and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain;** v. 3. **and it shall be that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city, shall take an heifer,** a young cow, **which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke,** one whose strength has in no way been broken by hard work; v. 4. **and the elders of that city,** not merely because some citizen of their town would be suspected of the crime, but because blood-guiltiness was upon Israel generally, and therefore especially upon the places in the neighborhood of the murder, **shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, a rocky gorge with a perennial stream, which is neither eared nor sown,** where some barren strip was useless for agricultural purposes, **and strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley,** break her neck in symbolical representation of the punishment which should have struck the murderer; v. 5. **and the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near,** some from the nearest city set aside for their residence; **for them the Lord, thy God, hath chosen to minister unto Him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word,** according to their advice and decision, **shall every controversy and every stroke be tried,** they decide the quarrels and determine when a punishment by beating should be administered, as the representatives of the Lord they receive the statement of the elders and sanction their action; v. 6. **and all the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley,** as a symbolical declaration of innocence, Ps. 26, 6; 73, 13; Matt. 27, 24; v. 7. **and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it,** they and their city were neither guilty of the crime, nor did they have any knowledge of its commission. V. 8. **Be merciful, O Lord, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast re-**

deemed, namely, by leading them out of Egypt, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge, they asked the Lord to cover over the guilt of blood and not lay the murder to their charge, since they were innocent of the blood that had been shed. **And the blood shall be forgiven them,** that is, the murder would not be placed to their account. Thus the share of guilt cleaving to their city was expiated. V. 9. **So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord.** Cp. Num. 35, 33. Doing right in the sight of God included also the proper punishment of the murderer, in case he should still be apprehended, for the rite here prescribed did not clear the criminal in the sight of God. His rule is that he who sheds men's blood, by men shall his blood be shed.

THE LAW OF CAPTIVE WOMEN.—V. 10. **When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies,** those outside of Canaan, chap. 20, 13—18, **and the Lord, thy God, hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive,** v. 11. **and seest among the captives a beautiful,** well-formed **woman, and hast a desire unto her,** said of the love which desires union in lawful marriage, **that thou wouldest have her to thy wife,** v. 12. **then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails,** that is, cut them, keep them trimmed, 2 Sam. 19, 24; v. 13. **and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her,** all these acts being in the nature of purifying rites, Lev. 14, 8; Num. 8, 7, **and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month,** that is, her separation from them; **and after that thou shalt go in unto her,** in the relation peculiar to marriage, **and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.** During this month the woman would have time even inwardly to detach herself from her previous relations and to adjust herself to the idea of joining the people of God, if possible, to be filled with genuine affection for the God of Israel and also for the man, whose action in declaring his readiness to marry her had saved her from the position and lot of a slave. V. 14. **And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her,** after the marriage had thus taken place, **then thou shalt let her go whither she will,** as a free woman, with the rights of an Israelitess; **but thou shalt not sell her at all for money,** such a procedure was not to be thought of, **thou shalt not make merchandise of her,** not attempt a violent treatment of her by selling her as a slave, **because thou hast humbled her,** in making use of the right of a husband. This was a humane, merciful provision, intended to protect the dignity of the woman and the sanctity of marriage.

OF THE FIRST-BORN IN BIGAMY. — V. 15. **If a man have two wives,** in that unnatural relation of bigamy which the Lord permitted among the Jews, **one beloved and another hated,** as in the case of Jacob, Gen. 29 and 30, who was indifferent to the point of neglect toward Leah, **and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the first-born son be hers that was hated,** v. 16. **then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath,** when he makes his will and divides his property, **that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first-born,** his love for the one wife should not cause him to commit an injustice to the true first-born son; v. 17. **but he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath,** of all the property found with him, for thus the first-born was distinguished among the children of Israel; **for he is the beginning of his strength,** as Reuben was that of Jacob, Gen. 49, 3; **the right of the first-born is his.** The Lord wants no favoritism shown at any time, but demands that right and justice rule among His people.

PUNISHMENT OF A REBELLIOUS CHILD. — V. 18. **If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son,** disputing the parental authority in disposition and deed, **which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother,** being incorrigibly disobedient and refractory, **and that, when they have chastened him,** have punished him according to the obligation resting upon them, **will not hearken unto them,** v. 19. **then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city,** to the magistrates who were charged with upholding authority and therefore also with backing up the parents in such a case, **and unto the gate of his place, the open space inside the city gate, where all public affairs of this nature were decided;** v. 20. **and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice,** calmly disregarding all commands; **he is a glutton and a drunkard,** a fact which explains his rebellious behavior. V. 21. **And all the men of his city,** not the parents themselves, who had no power over life and death, **shall stone him with stones that he die,** the whole city agreeing that the case is clear beyond question; **so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear and fear.** Thus parental authority was upheld among the Israelites, but at the same time guarded. A good many modern parents, who have reached the opposite extreme, in permitting their children to tread all authority, both parental and civil, under foot, might learn from this passage the fact that God will not be mocked.

Concerning the Body of One Hanged. — V. 22. **And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death,** one upon which the death penalty had been placed and also put into execution, **and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree,** literally, "on a wood," on some form of gallows, v. 23. **his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day,** before sunset, **(for he that is hanged is accursed of God,** rejected as detestable and as defiling the land,) **that thy land be not defiled,** morally, by the presence of this curse above the ground, which the offender had no longer been worthy to tread, **which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance.** This rule was carried out also in the case of Jesus, John 19, 31, because, as St. Paul writes, He became a curse for our sakes, Gal. 3, 13.

CHAPTER 22.

Additional Precepts, Especially Concerning the Sixth Commandment.

Various Minor Regulations. — V. 1. **Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them,** by acting as though one did not see and knew nothing of the matter, Ex. 23, 4; **thou shalt in any case,** most certainly, **bring them again unto thy brother.** V. 2. **And if thy brother,** the member of the Israelitish nation, **be not nigh unto thee,** if he does not live in the immediate neighborhood, **or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it,** the lost animal, **unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.** During this time it was to be guarded most carefully, in the most secure place of the house. V. 3. **In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment,** with all the property of the neighbor, no matter where it might be found; **and with all lost thing of thy brother's which he hath lost and thou hast found shalt thou do likewise; thou mayest not hide thyself,** attempt to evade the obligation of this duty. V. 4. **Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way,** under an excessive load, **and hide thyself from them,** try to ignore the happening; **thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again,** Ex. 23, 5. V. 5. **The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man,** literally, "Not shall be the vessels, the clothes, of a man upon a woman," **neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord, thy God.** The vessels and clothing referred to include all the special articles of wear and use peculiar to the one or the other sex; for the Lord did not want the children of Israel to ignore the difference of the sexes, as it had been fixed in creation. V. 6. **If a bird's nest chance to be before thee,** if a person just happens to strike it, **in the way in any tree or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young,** Lev. 22, 28; v. 7. **but thou shalt in any wise,** by all means, **let the dam go, and take the young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.** The mother relation was to be respected also among the irrational beasts. To take the mother-bird thus betrays an inhuman attitude in contrast with the sight presented, and is an unwarranted interference with the course of nature. V. 8. **When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof,** a parapet, or railing, along the edge of the flat roof, as they are customary in the Orient, **that thou bring not blood upon thine house if any man fall from thence;** for in the absence of a parapet the blame for any accident would strike the owner of the house. V. 9. **Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed,** literally, "the fulness of the seed," the fruit as fully matured, **which thou hast sown, and the fruit of the vineyard be defiled,** namely, by securing a mixed product or hybrids. V. 10. **Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together,** probably on account of the unequal strength and step of the two kinds of animals, which made the attempt both inhumane and unprofitable. V. 11. **Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together,** Lev. 19, 19. V. 12. **Thou shalt make thee fringes,** blossoms, tassels, **upon the four quarters of thy vesture wherewith thou coverest thyself.** "The mantle, or over-cloak, formed out of a four-cornered piece of cloth, should have at its wings, *i. e.*, corners, thus as if growing out from it, tassels, symbolizing the one aim of life, reminding the doer of the commands of God, taking himself out of the world, with heart and eye to have his conversation, his life, in heaven, Num. 15, 38 ff."[2]) By keeping all these precepts, the children of Israel were to prove themselves the peculiar people of the Lord.

Various Sins against the Sanctity of Holy Wedlock. — V. 13. **If any man take a wife and go in unto her,** in the act which God restricts to the married estate, **and hate her,** regard her with loathing after the gratification of his fleshly lust, 2 Sam. 13, 15, v. 14.

2) Lange-Schaff, *Deuteronomy*, 165,

and give occasions of speech against her, literally, "set upon her deeds of words," that is, reports without foundation, scandal, **and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid,** an unpolluted virgin, v. 15. **then shall the father of the damsel,** the designation leaving the matter of a probable guilt open, **and her mother,** the parents being very decidedly concerned in this accusation, **take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity,** as it was supposed distinguishable by spots of blood, **unto the elders of the city in the gate,** for it was the custom to save this evidence for just such an event; v. 16. **and the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;** v. 17. **and, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city,** as proof positive that the accusation was a lie. V. 18. **And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him,** pronounce upon him the judgment of punishment by whipping; v. 19. **and they shall amerce him,** sentence him to pay money, **in an hundred shekels of silver** (about $64), **and give them unto the father of the damsel,** to atone, in a way, for the slander brought upon that family, **because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days,** the right of divorce was taken from him. V. 20. **But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel,** when the supposed proofs of her virginity could not be produced; v. 21. **then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house,** for a testimony against it, because the parents were considered as participants in the guilt through defective discipline, oversight, and, perhaps, even deliberate deceit, **and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die, because she hath wrought folly in Israel,** the shamelessness of unchastity, **to play the whore in her father's house; so shalt thou put evil away from among you.** So much Israel's dignity, its character as the holy people of God, demanded. V. 22. **If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband,** under his rule, restricted to him in fleshly intercourse, **then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman and the woman,** for it was a plain case of deliberate adultery; **so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.** V. 23. **If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband,** in a rightful betrothal, as it was customary among the Jews, where the consent of the parents on either side and that of the girl had been secured, **and a man find her in the city and lie with her,** v. 24. **then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city,** did not call for help, for such cries would certainly have been heard in the city, whence it followed that she consented to the act; **and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife,** for a betrothed woman is a married wife in the eyes of God; **so thou shalt put away evil from among you,** by the summary punishment of the offenders against the holiness of marriage. V. 25. **But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her,** overcome her by main strength, **and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die;** v. 26. **but unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death,** the penalty should not be carried out where it was not deserved; **for as when a man riseth against his neighbor and slayeth him,** violently takes his life, **even so is this matter;** v. 27. **for he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried,** called for help, **and there was none to save her.** It was a plain case of rape. V. 28. **If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found,** v. 29. **then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver** (about $32), as an atonement for the disgrace inflicted by his act, **and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.** Cp. Ex. 22, 15. 16. Of course, the father had the right to deny his daughter to the man in such a case. V. 30. **A man shall not take his father's wife,** his stepmother, **nor discover** (uncover) **his father's skirt.** Incestuous lust is self-injury and a transgression also against the father, by the defiling of his bed. Cp. Lev. 18, 6; Ezek. 16, 8; Deut. 27, 20. The Lord wants only such servants as are pure and unspotted before Him, members of a people consecrated to His holiness.

CHAPTER 23.

Membership in Israel and Some of Its Duties.

Some Rules Concerning Membership. — V. 1. **He that is wounded in the stones, a man whose testicles are crushed, or hath his privy member cut off,** the urethra severed, thus being castrated, **shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.** Because the children of Israel were consecrated to Him, the Lord wanted them to possess also bodily perfection. For that reason, men that were thus injured or were eunuchs were not admitted to the full privileges of the congregation of Jehovah, though they were received as proselytes, Acts 8, 27. V. 2. **A bastard,** one born as the result of adultery or incest, one upon whom rests this evil stain of his conception and birth, **shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.** This rule cut him and all his descendants off forever, since the stain resting upon him would be transmitted to the entire congregation, whom the Lord, above all, desired to be holy. V. 3. **An Ammonite or Moabite,** who, as the descendants of Lot, were related to Israel, **shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever,** v. 4. **because they met you not with bread and with water in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt,** thus violating every custom of hospitality, as it was practised even by savage tribes, chap. 2, 19. 20, not to speak of the natural affection of kindred, **and because they hired against thee Balaam, the son of Beor, of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee,** Num. 22, 5. 6. V. 5. **Nevertheless the Lord, thy God, would not hearken unto Balaam,** would not permit him to carry out his intention of cursing Israel; **but the Lord, thy God, turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord, thy God, loved thee,** as Balaam himself was obliged to admit to Balak, Num. 24, 9. V. 6. **Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity,** not be concerned about advancing their good fortune, their welfare, **all thy days forever.** Their treatment of Israel had cut them off from all considerations of kindness, all this being done without the slightest motives of personal revenge, as the following section shows. V. 7. **Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother,** and the obligations of brotherhood had not been ignored by them to the extent practised by the Ammonites and Moabites, chap. 2, 6; **thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian because thou wast a stranger in his land;** they had received hospitality in Egypt, though they had been oppressed by Pharaoh. V. 8. **The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation,** that is, the great-grandsons of those who had become proselytes to the religion of Israel. In all these cases, the Lord Himself permitted individual exceptions, as in that of Ruth, Ruth 1, 4, who became an ancestress of Jesus. Cp. also 2 Sam. 10.

Personal Cleanliness during Campaigns of War. — V. 9. **When the host,** the army of Israel as represented by its camp of soldiers, **goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing,** namely, from defilement and uncleanness of the body. V. 10. **If there be among you any man that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night,** Lev. 15, 16, **then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp,** go out and stay out; v. 11. **but it shall be when evening cometh on,** when the day turns toward evening, **he shall wash himself with water; and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again.** V. 12. **Thou shalt have a place also without the camp whither thou shalt go forth abroad;** v. 13. **and thou shalt have a paddle,** a small spade, **upon thy weapon,** among the accoutrements or instruments of war which belonged to the outfit of every soldier; **and it shall be when thou wilt ease thyself abroad,** at the designated place, **thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee,** as a measure of sanitary precaution; v. 14. **for the Lord, thy God, walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee and turn away from thee,** not as though the easement in itself and the excrement were shameful, but its open presence could not be tolerated without destroying or injuring the reverence for Jehovah. Propriety and decency also in the matters here broached should be observed as a requirement of nature.

Various Duties within the Congregation. V. 15. **Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant,** the slave, **which is escaped from his master unto thee.** This rule concerned the case of a slave from one of the heathen nations, who had fled from his master on account of inhuman treatment. V. 16. **He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, in any of the cities of Israel, where it liketh him best,** he was at liberty to make such changes frequently, until he found a place which suited him in every respect; **thou shalt not oppress him,** he should be treated as a fellow-dweller in the

good land of Jehovah, and there was always chance of his becoming a member of God's people. V. 17. **There shall be no whore,** a so-called consecrated prostitute, **of the daughters of Israel, nor a Sodomite of the sons of Israel,** both of whom prostituted their bodies in the service of the Phenician goddess Astarte, a most shameful practise. V. 18. **Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore,** namely, one engaged in such unnatural excesses, **or the price of a dog,** what was usually paid to a Sodomite for one service, **into the house of the Lord, thy God, for any vow,** for the heathen even went to the extent of paying such money, the fruits of their lewdness, to their idols; **for even both these are an abomination unto the Lord, thy God,** both the gift and the giver. V. 19. **Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother,** take any interest for a necessary loan; **usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury,** since this would not agree with the demands of unselfish love. V. 20. **Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury,** perhaps one passing through Israel for purposes of trade; **but unto thy brother,** a member of the children of Israel, **thou shalt not lend upon usury,** the peculiar circumstances of the chosen people of God demanding the strictest insistence upon the law of love; **that the Lord, thy God, may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.** V. 21. **When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thy God,** Num. 30, 2, **thou shalt not slack to pay it,** Lev. 27, 1—13; **for the Lord, thy God, will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee,** for it was a sacred obligation and demanded payment. V. 22. **But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee,** for it is better not to make a vow than to vow and then not to pay, Eccl. 5, 3. 4. V. 23. **That which is gone out of thy lips,** in the form of a sacred promise to the Lord, **thou shalt keep and perform; even a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord, thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.** V. 24. **When thou comest into thy neighbor's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill,** enough to satisfy the demands of hunger, **at thine own pleasure,** according to the appetite and desire; **but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel,** to carry away a supply. V. 25. **When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor,** into the maturing grain, **then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand,** Matt. 12, 1; Luke 6, 1; **but thou shalt not move a sickle,** in the act of reaping, **unto thy neighbor's standing corn.** It was a privilege granted to the traveler, to the passer-by, who might feel hunger, but it was not to be abused by avaricious neighbors. With Christians the law of love regulates all the affairs of their lives, and they gladly submit to its guidance.

CHAPTER 24.

Precepts Concerning Home Life.

CHIEFLY OF DIVORCE, PLEDGES, AND LEPROSY. V. 1. **When a man hath taken a wife,** by the contract which constituted a valid betrothal, **and married her,** as her husband assumed the position of headship in the house, **and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her,** some shameful, loathsome, lascivious thing, probably in the form of self-pollution, **then let him write her a bill of divorcement,** a letter severing the marriage-tie, **and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.** V. 2. **And when she is departed out of his house,** after such summary dismissal, **she may go and be another man's wife,** she had her freedom to act thus. V. 3. **And if the latter husband,** the second husband, **hate her,** also finding something objectionable in her person or in her deportment, **and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, or if the latter husband die which took her to be his wife,** v. 4. **her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife after that she is defiled,** for that is what her second marriage amounted to, so far as her first husband was concerned; it was implicitly equal to adultery; **for that is abomination before the Lord; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance,** since such frivolous disregard of the sanctity of the marriage-tie was equivalent to unnatural sins of immorality and to incest, Lev. 18, 25. While divorce was thus permitted to the Jews, as the Lord says, on account of the hardness of their hearts, Matt. 19, 8. 9, yet remarriage, in the circumstances as noted, brought defilement upon the woman, and a remarriage of the first husband to the divorced woman was not permitted. V. 5. **When a man hath taken a new wife,** when he has but recently been married, **he shall not go out to war,** not even be mustered, as one who was merely engaged to be married, chap. 20, 7, **neither shall he be charged with any business,** with any public burden or political business; **but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken,** Prov. 5, 18, instead of bur-

dening her with care and anxiety through the exposure of his life or through his continual absence from home on civil business. V. 6. **No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge, neither the entire hand-mill, with its lower, stationary stone, nor the upper, movable stone, the grinder alone; for he taketh a man's life to pledge,** since the daily grinding of the grain and therefore the preparation of the bread for daily consumption depended upon this mill. Such an act would have been an inexcusable harshness. V. 7. **If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him,** namely, into slavery, **then that thief shall die, and thou shalt put evil away from among you.** V. 8. **Take heed in the plague of leprosy,** Lev. 13 and 14, **that thou observe diligently and do according to all that the priests, the Levites,** the sons of Levi, **shall teach you; as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do.** V. 9. **Remember what the Lord, thy God, did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.** The point of the warning is that the children of Israel were carefully to guard against such sins as would bring the plague of leprosy upon them, for that this sickness was sometimes inflicted by the Lord as a direct punishment they had seen in the case of Miriam, Num. 12, 10. Deliberate disobedience of the Lord, also in disregarding the laws of sane living which nature teaches, may to this day result in bad diseases and bitter self-accusations.

KINDNESS TOWARD THE POOR AND NEEDY. — V. 10. **When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.** The choice of the pledge was to be left to the borrower, and the lender was to respect the sanctity of his fellow-man's home. V. 11. **Thou shalt stand abroad,** outside the house, **and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee,** something which he could spare for the time being. V. 12. **And if the man,** the borrower, **be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge,** since this consisted, as a rule, of the upper garment or mantle, which was, at the same time, the poor man's covering; v. 13. **in any case, by all means, thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment,** which served for his bed, **and bless thee; and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord, thy God.** Cp. Ex. 22, 26. 27. V. 14. **Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, the laborer working for wages, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates,** Lev. 19, 13; v. 15. **at his day,** that is, day by day, **thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it,** Jer. 22, 13; Jas. 5, 4; **for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it,** he desires to have his wages regularly, because his life depends upon this money; **lest he cry against thee unto the Lord and it be sin unto thee.** V. 16. **The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers,** neither the one nor the other should suffer the punishment of death for crimes in which they took no part, which they did not countenance; **every man shall be put to death for his own sin.** In other words, the children of Israel were not to confound the justice of God, Ex. 20, 5, with that of man; they were not to presume upon God's methods of punishment. V. 17. **Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger nor of the fatherless,** Ex. 22, 20, 21; 23, 9; **nor take a widow's raiment to pledge.** Cp. Lev. 19, 33. 34. V. 18. **But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt,** oppressed on every hand with great severity, **and the Lord, thy God, redeemed thee thence; therefore I command thee to do this thing.** V. 19. **When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the Lord, thy God, may bless thee in all the work of thine hands,** as a reward of humanity and brotherly love. Cp. Lev. 19, 9. 10; 23, 22. V. 20. **When thou beatest thine olive-tree,** as was done before they were fully ripe, in order to insure a finer grade of oil, **thou shalt not go over the boughs again,** in the effort to obtain every last bit of fruit; **it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.** V. 21. **When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward,** go over the vines a second time; **it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.** V. 22. **And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt; therefore I command thee to do this thing,** chap. 15, 15. All believers will remember the obligations laid upon them in the matter of brotherly love and charity and take care to discharge these obligations whenever they have an opportunity to do so.

CHAPTER 25.

Precepts Regulating Corporal Punishment, Levirate Marriage, and Weights.

OF BODILY PUNISHMENTS. — V. 1. **If there be a controversy between men,** some matter of litigation, **and they come unto judgment,** bring the matter before the proper officers, **that the judges may judge them, then they,** the judges, **shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked,** declare the latter to be guilty before the law, Ex. 22, 8; 23, 7. V. 2. **And it shall be if the wicked man,** he whom the judges have found to be in the wrong, **be worthy to be beaten,** literally, "if a son of stripes the guilty one," **that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face,** while he personally witnessed the punishment, **according to his fault, by a certain number,** in proportion to the severity of his transgression. V. 3. **Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed,** this precept later resulting in the limit's being placed at thirty-nine, for there was danger of miscounting, and the Jews, especially after the return from the exile, were anything if not literal, 2 Cor. 11, 24; **lest, if he should exceed and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee,** lowered beneath the dignity of a man and a member of God's people. The punishment by whipping was in use also in Egypt, where the culprit was laid flat on the ground, his hands and feet held firmly, and the punishment administered on the back in the presence of the judge. V. 4. **Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.** The usual form of threshing in the Orient is that on a threshing-floor out in the open, where the grain was spread out and oxen driven back and forth across the floor to loosen the grain from the hulls by stepping upon the ears. The humane measure of keeping the animals unmuzzled at that time gave them an opportunity to pick up food whenever they became hungry. It seems that this precept was soon understood in the proverbial sense, in which it is also applied by St. Paul, in his admonition to provide properly for the pastors and teachers, 1 Cor. 9, 9; 1 Tim. 5, 18.

THE LEVIRATE MARRIAGE. — V. 5. **If brethren dwell together,** upon the same paternal inheritance, **and one of them die and have no child,** no one to perpetuate his family, and thus to keep his property in the possession of the family, **the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger,** any one outside her tribe or kindred; **her husband's brother,** or, as history shows, her nearest kinsman, Gen. 38, 8; Ruth 1, 12, **shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.** Thus the marriage with a sister-in-law, otherwise forbidden by Law, Lev. 18, 16, was made a duty in this case. V. 6. **And it shall be that the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead,** being considered and registered in the genealogical table as the son and rightful heir of his mother's first husband, **that his name be not put out of Israel.** In this way many difficult questions concerning inheritances were avoided. V. 7. **And if the man like not to take his brother's wife,** for the marriage was not an absolute or unavoidable duty, **then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders,** for questions of right and justice were usually disposed of in the open space inside the city gates, **and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel,** to perpetuate his family in the manner here provided for, **he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother,** namely, by marrying the widow. V. 8. **Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak unto him; and if he stand to it and say, I like not to take her,** if he found himself unable to throw off the unwillingness to comply with the custom as fixed by the levirate law, v. 9. **then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders,** go directly up to him right there in public, because he was bound to submit to what followed, **and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.** Her act of contempt in a way compensated her for the reproach which the man heaped upon her by refusing to marry her, and thus to found and establish his brother's family. The taking off of the shoe was a custom signifying the ceding of a piece of ground or property to some one else, just as one declares his rights of ownership by stepping upon such property. The disgrace in this case consisted in the fact that the woman loosed the man's shoe, thus publicly depriving him of his right to the property of his dead brother. V. 10. **And his name shall be called in Israel "The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."** So the disgrace would rest upon the man, even in the nickname which he bore, for having neglected the duty of relationship to his brother. There is no discrepancy between this passage and the law of Lev. 18. For the marriage with one's sister-in-law was forbidden when there were children, since the integrity of the brother's house was thus upheld; here it was commanded in order to keep the family of the brother from becoming extinct.

CORRECT WEIGHTS AND MEASURES. — V. 11. **When men strive together one with another,** become engaged in fisticuffs, **and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand,**

and taketh him by the secrets, v. 12. **then thou,** the constituted authority, **shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.** This precept was here inserted in order to guard against a false freedom and familiarity of the female sex toward those of the opposite sex. V. 13. **Thou shalt not have in thy bag,** usually a large leather sack or purse, **divers weights, a great and a small,** a set of large stones for purchases, a set of small ones for sales. This could be done both where stones and where scraps of iron were used by the merchants.3) V. 14. **Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small,** a large ephah or dry measure for purchases, a small ephah for sales. V. 15. **But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight,** each one, whether in the shop or in the house, complete, whole, holding just the amount which it was supposed to hold, **a perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee,** in the matter of receiving temporal blessings, chap. 4, 26; 5, 16. V. 16. **For all that do such things,** in making use of dishonesty in any form, **and all that do unrighteously,** any one guilty of deliberate wrong-doing, **are an abomination unto the Lord, thy God.** But this consideration shown the neighbor at home was not to degenerate into a false weakness and indulgence toward enemies whose extermination the Lord had decided upon. V. 17. **Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt,** Ex. 17, 8; v. 18. **how he met thee by the way,** namely, at Rephidim near Horeb, **and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.** The inhumanity practised by the Amalekites in thus injuring and destroying the stragglers of the Israelitish army showed that there was no fear of God in their ranks. V. 19. **Therefore it shall be when the Lord, thy God, hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.** Cp. 12, 10; Ex. 17, 14; Deut. 9, 7. Israel, acting as God's agent, carried out this command at the time of Saul, 1 Sam. 15.

3) Cp. Barton, *Archeology and the Bible*, 161.

CHAPTER 26.

Prayers Offered with First-Fruits and Tithes.

Prayer of Thanksgiving. — V. 1. **And it shall be when thou art come in unto the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein,** v. 2. **that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth,** Ex. 23, 19; 34, 26, **which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket,** one woven, usually of willow-withes, **and shalt go unto the place which the Lord, thy God, shall choose to place His name there.** This offering was a part of the first-fruits of the land as they were deposited in the Sanctuary of Jehovah for the purpose here outlined. V. 3. **And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days,** the officiating priest, **and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord, thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us.** The confession was made by the bringing of the first-fruits, for the contents of the basket were the actual proof of Israel's having taken possession of the land and enjoying its increase. V. 4. **And the priests shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord, thy God,** before the altar of burnt offering, as a gift of thanksgiving to Jehovah. To the symbolic act and confession there was now added a comprehensive prayer of thanksgiving. V. 5. **And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord, thy God, A Syrian, ready to perish,** an Aramean wandering about, **was my father,** a reference to Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia and to his subsequent wanderings in the Land of Promise, **and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few,** as the ancestor of the twelve tribes, **and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous,** Ex. 1, 7. 9; v. 6. **and the Egyptians evil entreated us,** by an unendurable oppression, Ex. 1, 11. 12, **and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage;** v. 7. **and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression,** Ex. 2, 23; 4, 31; v. 8. **and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm,** Ex. 12, 37. 51, **and with great terribleness,** in sending terror upon the Egyptians by the great wonders and plagues which Moses performed, **and with signs, and with wonders;** v. 9. **and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.** V. 10. **And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it,** the basket, **before the Lord, thy God,** for this prayer ended the formal cere-

mony, **and worship before the Lord, thy God,** bow down before Him in adoration; v. 11. **and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord, thy God, hath given unto thee and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you,** chap. 12, 7. 12. 18; 16, 11. 14; 18, 4. Solemn, grateful festal joy was to reign in the hearts of the Israelites upon this occasion and be evident in their entire behavior. Every prayer of thanksgiving includes a declaration of God's goodness, a recital of His mercies.

THE CONFESSION AND PRAYER WITH TITHES. V. 12. **When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing,** the reference here being to the triennial charity tithe, chap. 14, 28. 29, **and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow that they may eat within thy gates and be filled,** have all they need to sustain their lives, v. 13. **then thou shalt say before the Lord, thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things,** those devoted to the Lord by His command, **out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Thy commandments which Thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them,** the very fact that this confession was required served as an inducement to keep the regulation concerning tithes; v. 14. **I have not eaten thereof in my mourning,** namely, while engaged in mourning for some dead person, for during that time the Israelite was Levitically unclean, **neither have I taken away aught thereof for any unclean use, nor given aught thereof for the dead,** namely, by sending it to some friend's house of mourning, for the use of the mourners, for the house where a dead person lay was regarded as unclean, and hence nothing consecrated to the Lord was permitted to enter; **but I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord, my God, and have done according to all that Thou hast commanded me.** V. 15. **Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven,** which was looked upon as the throne of Jehovah, Is. 63, 15; Zech. 2, 13, **and bless Thy people Israel, and the land which Thou hast given us, as Thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.** The believing Israelite included his entire nation in his prayer, just as the Lord taught us Christians to do in the prayer which He Himself formulated.

KEEPING THE COVENANT. — V. 16. **This day the Lord, thy God, hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart and with all thy soul,** the hearing and accepting of the Law on the part of Israel being equivalent to the declaration of loyalty to Jehovah in word and deed. V. 17. **Thou hast avouched,** said of causing the other party of a contract to say, to make a declaration regarding some intention, **the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments,** both the precepts of the covenant and the obligations toward God and men as they flowed from the Moral Law, **and to hearken unto His voice;** v. 18. **and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people,** the people of His possession, Ex. 19, 5. 6, **as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments;** v. 19. **and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made,** for He is the Creator of all people, **in praise and in name and in honor,** for all men witnessing the deeds of the Lord toward His chosen people would be constrained to magnify Jehovah as the supreme, the only God; **and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord, thy God, as He hath spoken;** for that was the aim and the purpose of the Lord in all His dealing with His people. This end and aim of the divine will is still being realized in His Church, His believers, whom He intends to exalt to bliss ineffable in heaven, Eph. 1, 4.

CHAPTER 27.

The Law Established in Canaan.

THE STONE MONUMENT. — V. 1. **And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day,** namely, that which now follows. V. 2. **And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster,** to prepare them for the inscription which they were to receive, for the stones were apparently of great size, and a number of them could well receive the inscription intended for them; v. 3. **and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this Law,** as the public confession of the children of Israel and as the norm of its entire life, **when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee.** The purpose of the command was realized by inscribing at least the Ten Commandments, as the nucleus of the entire Mosaic Law, but it is

probable that all the regulations of the Ceremonial Law were included. If Israel would keep this Law, then the people were to have the Land of Promise for a lasting possession. V. 4. **Therefore it shall be, when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal,** in the approximate center of the land, **and thou shalt plaster them with plaster,** either with gypsum or with lime. V. 5. **And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord, thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them,** the stones were to be neither plastered nor hewn, Ex. 20, 22. V. 6. **Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord, thy God, of whole stones; and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, thy God,** as expressing the entire and undivided devotion of Israel to Jehovah; v. 7. **and thou shalt offer peace-offerings,** expressing the enjoyment of the fellowship with Jehovah and the confidence of salvation in Him, **and shalt eat there,** celebrate a sacrificial meal, **and rejoice before the Lord, thy God.** V. 8. **And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this Law very plainly,** as a constant reminder to all the members of the nation. As the individual dwellings, so the whole land was to be holy to God, as a sanctuary of heavenly truth.

THE CURSE PRONOUNCED FROM MOUNT EBAL. V. 9. **And Moses and the priests, the Levites,** the children of Levi, **spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed and hearken,** listen very quietly, in order not to lose one word, **O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the Lord, thy God,** by the solemn establishing of the Law in Canaan the covenant with Jehovah was renewed. V. 10. **Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord, thy God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day.** This was the obligation which was laid upon Israel as the people of the covenant. V. 11. **And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,** v. 12. **These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim,** the mountain just south of Mount Ebal, separated from it by a narrow valley, **to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin,** the sons more highly esteemed in the family of Jacob; v. 13. **and these shall stand upon Mount Ebal to curse,** to pronounce the curse upon the transgressors: **Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali,** the sons of the handmaids and those less highly esteemed in the family of Jacob. V. 14. **And the Levites shall speak,** the Levitical priests, the duty of whose position it was, **and say unto all the men of Israel,** assembled on the two mountains, **with a loud voice,** v. 15. **Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image,** Ex. 20, 4. 23; 34, 17, **an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman,** Is. 44, 12. 13, **and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen,** thus signifying their full assent to the curse. V. 16. **Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother,** Ex. 21, 17. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 17. **Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark,** chap. 19, 14. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 18. **Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way,** Lev. 19, 14. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 19. **Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow,** chap. 24, 17. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 20. **Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt,** chap. 23, 1; Lev. 18, 8. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 21. **Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast,** Lev. 18, 23. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 22. **Cursed be he that lieth with his sister,** stepsister, half-sister, **the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother,** Lev. 18, 9. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 23. **Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law,** Lev. 18, 17. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 24. **Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor secretly,** Ex. 20, 13. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 25. **Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person,** hired to commit cold-blooded murder, Ex. 23, 7. 8. **And all the people shall say, Amen.** V. 26. **Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.** This last curse, which condemns any and every transgression of the divine Law, shows that the individual cases mentioned in the preceding curses are only examples, and for the most part such as imply a secret transgression. The curses only are mentioned in this list, because it was the object of the Law to awaken a desire for the Messiah, who would take the curse away and bring the true blessing. We see here also that the office of the Law is that of proclaiming the divine curse and damnation, from which only He who became a curse for us is able to deliver all men, Gal. 3, 10. 13.

CHAPTER 28.

Blessing and Curse Proclaimed.

THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE. — V. 1. **And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord, thy God, will set thee on high above all nations of the earth,** this being the thought which is developed in the description of the blessings, as it now follows; v. 2. **and all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee,** so as to surround every obedient Israelite with their fulness, **if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God,** for that is always the condition whose fulfilment may not be evaded. V. 3. **Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field,** out in the country, these two designations including the spheres in which life ordinarily moves. V. 4. **Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.** The rich blessing of many children, always represented so in the Bible, would be equaled by the number and the quality of all other products. V. 5. **Blessed shall be thy basket,** the place where the products of farm and orchard are stored for immediate use, **and thy store,** the kneading-trough, Ex. 12, 34, where the bread was prepared from day to day. V. 6. **Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out,** Num. 27, 17, the blessing thus extending to all undertakings. V. 7. **The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face,** said in the form of a sincere wish: May the Lord deliver thine enemies smitten before thy face! the obligation of obedience thus being brought out once more. **They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways,** in hopeless confusion, in utter rout. V. 8. **The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses,** literally, place it at their disposal in causing their granaries and elevators to be full to overflowing, **and in all that thou settest thine hand unto,** in business of every kind; **and He shall bless thee in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.** V. 9. **The Lord shall establish thee,** set thee up on high, **an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee,** Ex. 19, 5. 6; Gen. 22, 16, **if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord, thy God, and walk in His ways.** Thus the destiny of Israel would be realized. V. 10. **And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord,** this conviction would be impressed upon them by the evidence before their eyes, the life of the entire people serving as an object-lesson, showing that Israel was in intimate fellowship with Jehovah; **and they shall be afraid of thee,** filled with awe and fear of the almighty power of Jehovah as shown in His dominion over Israel. V. 11. **And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods,** give them more than enough for good fortune and prosperity, **in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.** V. 12. **The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure,** the storehouse of His rich blessings, **the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season,** Lev. 26, 4, **and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow,** chap. 15, 6. V. 13. **And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail,** always first and never last; **and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath,** having the advantage in every undertaking, always the victor in every war, **if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, thy God, which I command thee this day to observe and to do them;** v. 14. **and thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left,** the slightest deviation from the path of God's commands being regarded as unfaithfulness to the covenant between them and Jehovah, **to go after other gods to serve them.** There is always that suggestive and impressive reminder of the necessity of keeping the covenant with all strictness, in that perfection which the holiness of God demands. This applies also to-day. Where the fear of God dwells in a country, the blessing of the Lord is usually in evidence, for righteousness exalteth a nation.

THE CURSES OF DISOBEDIENCE. — V. 15. **But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses,** namely, those enumerated in the second part of the chapter, **shall come upon thee and overtake thee,** like the victorious enemies seeking to take as many captives as possible. V. 16. **Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.** V. 17. **Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.** V. 18. **Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.** V. 19. **Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.** These four verses correspond exactly to vv. 3—6, in order to emphasize the curse as the direct opposite of the blessing. V. 20. **The Lord shall send upon thee cursing,** His emphatic execration, **vexation,** the dismay and

consternation following the divine curse, **and rebuke,** the threat of His holy wrath, **in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do,** in every plan and in every undertaking, **until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly,** the judgment of God striking down the offenders suddenly, **because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me.** After this introductory summary a more detailed enumeration of the various punishments is given. V. 21. **The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until He have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.** The most severe and the most dreaded disease is named first, to increase the effectiveness of the description. V. 22. **The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption,** the terrible white plague, the scourge of the world, **and with a fever,** Lev. 26, 16, **and with an inflammation,** fever attended with a very high temperature, **and with an extreme burning, and with the sword,** or drought, **and with blasting,** which would dry up the grain in the fields, **and with mildew,** the untimely blight falling on the green ear and turning it yellow; **and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.** V. 23. **And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass,** not sending forth one drop of rain, Lev. 26, 19, as often happened in the later history of Israel, **and the earth that is under thee shall be iron,** not yielding so much as an ear of grain. V. 24. **The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust,** in the form of severe dust-storms, accompanied by a burning wind, as they sometimes sweep over Palestine; **from heaven shall it come upon thee until thou be destroyed.** V. 25. **The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them,** this being the reverse of the blessing spoken of in v. 7; **and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth,** literally, "for a removing," or, for a football, namely, for all the kingdoms of the earth to play with, 2 Chron. 29, 8. V. 26. **And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the earth,** the greatest shame and disgrace which could strike a dead person, Jer. 7, 33; 16, 4, **and no man shall fray them away,** scare away the birds and beasts of prey from their gruesome meal. V. 27. **The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt,** a form of leprosy which was very common in Egypt, **and with the emerods,** painful ulcers, **and with the scab, and with the itch,** both disagreeable skin diseases, **whereof thou canst not be healed;** all medical skill would avail nothing when the virulence of the cases would be a punishment of the Lord. V. 28. **The Lord shall smite thee with madness,** an insanity which shut off all sane consciousness, **and blindness, and astonishment of heart,** a disease which interfered with the proper functioning of the heart. V. 29. **And thou shalt grope at noonday,** at the time when objects should be doubly clear, **as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways,** utterly unable to find the way which would lead to success; **and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.** The utter ruin of the individual and of the entire country is here depicted. V. 30. **Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her,** thus deflowering the bride-to-be and bringing sorrow to him who was her husband before God; **thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein; thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof,** the owner would not retain it in his possession till the fifth year, when he might enjoy the fruit. V. 31. **Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof; thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee; thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.** V. 32. **Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people,** dragged away into shameful slavery, **and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand,** the parents would be altogether helpless, unable to rescue their children. This section is now summarized. V. 33. **The fruit of thy land and all thy labors shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway,** v. 34. **so that thou shalt be mad,** driven to insanity, **for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.** The threat of v. 27 is now once more taken up. V. 35. **The Lord shall smite thee in the knees and in the legs with a sore botch,** a leprosy of all the joints, **that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head,** for the ulcers spread out from the joints. V. 36. **The Lord shall bring thee, and the king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone,** seduced into idolatry of the most flagrant kind. V. 37. **And thou shalt become an astonishment,** an object which would cause horror, **a proverb,** one whose example would be cited in proverbial sayings, **and a byword,** an object of raillery, **among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.** Details of the curse as it would strike Canaan are now given. V. 38. **Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it,** Joel 1, 4. V. 39. **Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them,** do the work of a husbandman with painstaking care, **but shalt neither drink of the wine,**

nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. Throughout this section the Hebrew brings out the contrast much more strongly by placing the object first. V. 40. **Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit,** or it would be rooted out and its fruit scattered by strong winds. V. 41. **Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them,** literally, "they shall not be thine"; **for they shall go into captivity.** V. 42. **All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume,** take possession of and enjoy as they choose, utterly destroy. V. 43. **The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high,** growing richer and more influential right along; **and thou shalt come down very low,** becoming impoverished in the same degree as the other increases in wealth. V. 44. **He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him; he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.** So the opposite of vv. 12 and 13 would come to pass. V. 45. **Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee,** like a relentless, vindictive enemy, **till thou be destroyed because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded thee;** v. 46. **and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever.** The curses are spoken of as arousing astonishment and horror, because they so plainly show the direct interference of the Lord in punishing the disobedience of the people. The punishment is now presented from still another angle. V. 47. **Because thou servedst not the Lord, thy God, with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things,** for the Lord, from the beginning, had blessed His people in an unusually rich amount, v. 48. **therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he,** the enemy, **shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee.** Since they would have rejected the Lord with the richness of His goodness, He would compel them to accept the alternative of the enemies' sore oppression. V. 49. **The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth,** as he pounces down suddenly upon his prey; **a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand,** and therefore be unable to communicate with the enemy and to plead for a merciful treatment on his part; v. 50. **a nation of fierce countenance,** beyond every impression of mercy, **which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young,** striking down indiscriminately whatever happens to be in the way; v. 51. **and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.** This description fits all the great world powers, through whom the Lord carried out His punishment upon the disobedient and rebellious Israel, Assyrians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Romans. V. 52. **And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates,** every city in the entire land, **until thy high and fenced walls,** solid and fortified as they are, **come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord, thy God, hath given thee.** The campaign is thus described as being both comprehensive and exhaustive. To such extremities would the people be reduced that the means resorted to for the purpose of maintaining life would be almost unbelievably horrible. V. 53. **And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord, thy God, hath given thee,** a most revolting form of cannibalism, **in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee,** these words being repeated in a horrible refrain in vv. 55 and 57; v. 54. **so that the man that is tender among you,** having avoided hardships of every kind all his life, **and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave,** he who formerly was satisfied only with the finest delicacies and despised ordinary food, would now grudge those nearest to him a share in the loathsome meal, the flesh of his own children; v. 55. **so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.** Cp. Lev. 26, 29. V. 56. **The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness,** insisting upon riding some beast of burden for even the shortest distances or reclining upon the cushions of a litter, **her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,** v. 57. **and toward,** rather, because of, **her young one,** the afterbirth, **that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear,** namely, during the siege, for these she would keep for her own food; **for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.** This was literally fulfilled, 2 Kings 6,

28. 29; and Josephus relates an instance from the siege of Jerusalem.4) And still the measure of the curse is not full. V. 58. **If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this Law that are written in this book,** the precepts as they were contained in the five books, including Deuteronomy, **that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD, THY GOD,** Lev. 24, 11; Ex. 14, 4. 17; Lev. 10, 3, v. 59. **then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful and the plagues of thy seed,** visit them with unheard-of diseases, **even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.** V. 60. **Moreover, He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt,** the sicknesses included in the ten great plagues, **which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.** The Israelites had been delivered from them by the departure out of Egypt, but the Lord would now deliberately turn the diseases back upon them. V. 61. **Also every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of this Law, them will the Lord bring upon thee until thou be destroyed.** V. 62. **And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord, thy God.** And still more strongly the Lord puts His threat, as if He felt vindictive satisfaction in punishing the sinners. V. 63. **And it shall come to pass that, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to naught; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.** Thus the last prop of the people which held up a false confidence and a false conception of the mercy of God was knocked away; for the righteousness and holiness of God demands the punishment of all those that despise the riches of His goodness and long-suffering. V. 64. **And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other,** a threat which was also literally fulfilled, as the history of the Jews shows; **and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.** V. 65. **And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest,** a homeless people, always feeling the curse of the exile; **but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart and failing of eyes and sorrow of mind,** Lev. 26, 36 ff.; v. 66. **and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee,** like a precious treasure hanging suspended by a very thin thread and ever in danger of being lost; **and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life,** despairing continually of its preservation; v. 67. **in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.** The uncertainty of their fate would keep them in a continuous state of fear and terror. V. 68. **And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with hips,** stored away in slave ships, and with no possibility of escape, **by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again,** chap. 17, 16; **and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen,** put up for sale in the slave-market, **and no man shall buy you,** for their look, by the curse of God, would frighten the buyer away. It would mean the lowest stage of degradation. This curse was fulfilled at the time of the Romans, in Egypt, but all the others were also fulfilled in a terrible manner during the Middle Ages, and even in modern times. The fate of Israel is a constant warning: Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

4) *Wars of the Jews,* Book VI, chapter III.

CHAPTER 29.

A Final Reminder.

Of the Deliverance from Egypt. — V. 1. **These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab,** while they were still encamped in the steppes east of Jordan, **beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.** This verse is inserted to form the transition from the preceding speeches and to be the title of the last admonitions of Moses, especially of his urgent invitation to be mindful of the covenant and to keep its obligations sacred. V. 2. **And Moses called unto all Israel, all the members of the Lord's people** being included in this summons, **and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh and unto all his servants and unto all his land,** all the older ones of them having been eye-witnesses of the works of the Lord; v. 3. **the great temptations which thine eyes have seen,** by which the Lord tested the attitude of Pharaoh, **the signs and those great miracles,** chap. 4, 34; 7, 19; v. 4. **yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.** Cp. chap. 5, 26. The outer senses of their bodies had indeed taken note of what happened, but they were

still lacking in inner understanding. V. 5. **And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot,** not only did they always have clothes when they needed them, but the very ones which they wore had lasting qualities beyond those of ordinary garments, chap. 8, 3. 4. V. 6. **Ye have not eaten bread,** since the Lord nourished them with manna during the wilderness journey, **neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink,** like men devoted to the Lord, **that ye might know that I am the Lord, your God.** V. 7. **And when ye came unto this place,** the region east of Jordan, **Sihon, the king of Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them,** chap. 2, 32; 3, 1; Num. 21, 21—35; v. 8. **and we took their land and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half tribe of Manasseh,** chap. 3, 12. 13. V. 9. **Keep, therefore,** because of all these special miracles of the Lord they were to act wisely and observe **the words of this covenant and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do;** the proper attitude of the heart and mind toward Jehovah is in itself a reward, but the Lord wanted to give them, in addition, outward prosperity. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4, 8.

A SOLEMN CALL TO OBEDIENCE. — V. 10. **Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord, your God,** not only the men, but also the women, the children, and the strangers who had cast their lot with theirs; **your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel,** v. 11. **your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water,** the men lowest in the social scale, the men that performed the lowest and meanest services; v. 12. **that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord, thy God,** thus to pass into His keeping, to declare their allegiance to Him, **and into His oath which the Lord, thy God, maketh with thee this day,** in the form of a new declaration of the covenant made at Horeb, v. 13. **that He may establish thee to-day for a people unto Himself, a people** of His possession, **and that He may be unto thee a God,** their highest good and the supreme object of their adoration, **as He hath said unto thee, and as He hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.** V. 14. **Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath,** v. 15. **but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord, our God,** those then living and present, **and also with him that is not here with us this day,** this word including not only the descendants of Israel, but extending properly to all nations, as Jehovah intended to reveal Himself to them through the Gospel; v. 16. **(for ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which ye passed by,** the lessons of their sojourn in Egypt and of their journey through the wilderness were to be heeded all their lives; v. 17. **and ye have seen their abominations,** the detestable things which they did in their heathen worship, **and their idols,** dead logs, inanimate blocks, **wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them;)** v. 18. **lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord, our God,** while all these facts were still fresh in their memory, almost before their eyes, **to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood,** a fitting picture of the dangerous fruits brought forth by idolatrous practises; v. 19. **and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse,** of the oath which confirmed the covenant with such emphatic threats of punishment, **that he bless himself in his heart,** call himself fortunate, **saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination,** hardness or stubbornness, **of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst,** to bring death and destruction not only upon those that are already infected with the poison of idolatry, but also to those that are longing to indulge in its practises. V. 20. **The Lord will not spare him,** namely, the man guilty of such a transgression, **but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man,** break forth in a consuming fire, **and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven,** chap. 9, 14; Ex. 17. 14. V. 21. **And the Lord shall separate him,** put him aside and destine him, **unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel,** and no longer a member of the holy people of God, **according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in the book of this Law,** not only the individual, but the family and the entire tribe, v. 22. **so that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land,** where such idolatrous customs were introduced and practised, first by the individual, then by the community, **and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it;** v. 23. **and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein,** the land thus being utterly desolate, **like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Ze-**

boim, Gen. 19, 24. 25, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and in His wrath; v. 24. even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? V. 25. Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Evypt; v. 26. for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom He had not given unto them, chap. 11, 28; 4, 19, since Jehovah alone is the eternal portion of Israel; v. 27. and the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book, Lev. 26, 14—38; chap. 28, 15—68; v. 28. and the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger and in wrath and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, like a weed that is torn out by the roots and thrown aside, as it is this day. The vivid form of presentation was intended to impress the dangers of apostasy upon the minds of all the hearers. V. 29. The secret things belong unto the Lord, our God, who alone knew in what way His counsel for the future would be carried out, how His plan of salvation would be realized; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, for they had the will of God in its written form, that we may do all the words of this Law, for upon that they were dependent, to that they were bound. We Christians have the Word of the Lord, as He revealed it to the men inspired by Him. With that we should rest content and not seek new revelations, keys, or other manifestations.

CHAPTER 30.

A Last Exhortation.

Mercies Promised to the Obedient. — V. 1. And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and history shows that the fulfilment of the curse came exactly as threatened by the Lord, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord, thy God, hath driven thee, for the bitter misery of their condition would bring at least some of the people to their senses, v. 2. and shalt return unto the Lord, thy God, in true sorrow over the manifold transgressions, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul, v. 3. that then the Lord, thy God, will turn thy captivity, with its misery and affliction, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord, thy God, hath scattered thee. The reference is to the gathering of the true Israel, that according to the spirit, for the early Christian congregations consisted largely of Jewish members of various countries, as the story of Pentecost shows.5) V. 4. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, to the most distant inhabited lands, from thence will the Lord, thy God, gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee, for He has His elect even to-day among the Jews in every country, and there are still a few who are won for the true Messiah; v. 5. and the Lord, thy God, will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, namely, in the sense that the spiritual Israel will be found in all the nations of the world, Gen. 17, 6. 16; and He will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers, since the believers, the true children of Abraham, are found in all nations, and peoples, and tongues. V. 6. And the Lord, thy God, will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, chap. 10, 16, take away the hardness and callousness, to love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. It is after the coming of the Messiah, in the Church named after Jesus Christ, that the ideal of the Lord has been fully realized. V. 7. And the Lord, thy God, will put all these curses upon thine enemies and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. Cp. Gen. 12, 3. V. 8. And thou shalt return, and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all His commandments which I command thee this day. At no time was Israel obdurate and therefore rejected in all its members, although the great mass of the people to this day are living under the curse. Those chosen by the Lord have bowed down in the obedience of faith under the precepts of the Gospel. V. 9. And the Lord, thy God, will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in every undertaking, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good; for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good as He rejoiced over thy fathers, v. 10. if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the Law, and if thou turn unto the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart and

5) Stoeckhardt, *Biblische Geschichte des Alt. Testaments*, 151.

with all thy soul. Here the normal, the desirable relation between Israel and the covenant God is described, the fellowship which would result in rich blessings to all those that kept its obligations.

DEATH AND LIFE SET BEFORE ISRAEL. — V. 11. **For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off,** it could not be said to be unusually difficult, either with regard to its knowledge or its fulfilment. V. 12. **It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it?** V. 13. **Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it?** There was no need for such hypocritical sanctimoniousness, as though it were merely a question of having the Law in an accessible place: If we could but lay our hands on it and hear it and study it, then we should be glad to keep its precepts! V. 14. **But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.** The Word of the Law had not been written down in secret and hidden from the eyes of the people, but it had been brought to the attention of the entire congregation in the spoken word, in public proclamation; it had become the subject of discussions in their midst; they had had time to meditate upon it. All the greater, therefore, was their obligation to keep it. These words are by St. Paul, Rom. 10, 6—8, applied to the Word of the Gospel. That also is not inaccessible to any man, for its sound has gone forth into all the lands, it is being preached throughout the world. It is but necessary to hear, to read, to accept, to confess. V. 15. **See, I have set before thee this day,** in this series of addresses, **life and good, and death and evil,** the way which leads to everlasting happiness, and that which leads to eternal destruction, v. 16. **in that I command thee this day to love the Lord, thy God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply,** for the observing of the Lord's precepts opened the way to life; **and the Lord, thy God, shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.** V. 17. **But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away,** said of those that are more than willing to be seduced to idolatrous practises, **and worship other gods and serve them,** v. 18. **I denounce unto you this day,** in a solemn proclamation, **that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.** Cp. chap. 4, 26; 8, 19. V. 19. **I call heaven and earth,** with the inhabitants of both these spheres, **to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live,** enjoy prosperity here and everlasting happiness in the world beyond; v. 20. **that thou mayest love the Lord, thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy Life,** the Source and Giver of a happy life, both here and yonder, **and the length of thy days,** in Him alone the enjoyment of any gift has permanence; **that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.** We Christians also have life and death, everlasting salvation and eternal damnation, laid before us in the Word of God. He that believes the Gospel and trusts in the mercy of God in simple faith will have eternal life. He will also give evidence of his faith in his obedience to the Word and command of God. But he who does not believe the Gospel, preferring to live a life of sin and shame, will be lost forever.

CHAPTER 31.

Joshua Made Leader of the People.

THE CHARGE TO JOSHUA. — V. 1. **And Moses went,** he appeared before the people in a last solemn farewell, **and spake these words unto all Israel.** V. 2. **And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day,** cp. Ex. 7, 7; **I can no more go out and come in,** his personal work before the people had now come to an end, Num. 27, 17; also **the Lord hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan,** Num. 20, 24. V. 3. **The Lord, thy God, He will go over before thee, and He will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them,** take possession of all the land which had formerly belonged to the Canaanitish tribes and which they still occupied; **and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said,** chap. 3, 28. V. 4. **And the Lord shall do unto them as He did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them whom He destroyed,** Num. 21, 21—35. V. 5. **And the Lord shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you,** chap. 7, 2. 24; for the Lord's intention was to make it a war of extermination. V. 6. **Be strong and of a good courage,** chap. 1, 21; 20, 3;

fear not, nor be afraid of them, chap. 7, 18; **for the Lord, thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee,** literally, He will not let thee sink down nor loosen His hold on thee; He would not leave them without His guiding, sustaining hand, nor indeed entirely forsake them. V. 7. **And Moses called unto Joshua and said unto him in the sight of all Israel,** with formal solemnity, **Be strong and of a good courage; for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it;** as the future leader of the people he was bound, of course, to set them all the best example of steadfast courage. V. 8. **And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed;** he was not to sink down and shrink back in view of the magnitude of the task set before him. V. 9. **And Moses wrote this Law,** the entire code of precepts as it had been transmitted to him by the Lord, **and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord,** Num. 4, 15, **and unto all the elders of Israel;** for these two classes were given permanent charge of Israel's ordinances and precepts, as being responsible for their promulgation and observance. V. 10. **And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years,** in the so-called Sabbatical Year, **in the solemnity of the year of release,** chap. 15, 1—11, **in the Feast of Tabernacles,** the last great festival of the Jewish ecclesiastical year, v. 11. **when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord, thy God, in the place which He shall choose,** at the central Sanctuary, **thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their hearing,** for that was the purpose for which they were entrusted with the written code of the Law, that they might proclaim and teach it. V. 12. **Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord, your God,** with that wholesome reverence and awe which flows from faith, **and observe to do all the words of this Law;** v. 13. **and that their children, which have not known anything,** not having heard the proclamation of the various precepts by the mouth of Moses, **may hear, and learn to fear the Lord, your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it,** as long as they and their descendants occupied the land of Canaan. In this way the Law of the Lord was to be made pleasant and acceptable to the entire nation, and children and children's children were to treasure it as a precious gift of His mercy. Note the prominence given to the children at this point and the emphasis placed upon their being taught properly. We are also bound to the written Word of God, and if we are truly members of God's people, we shall be grateful for every opportunity to hear the proclamation of the Word of God and keep it with a cheerful observance.

THE LORD'S CHARGE TO MOSES AND TO THE LEVITES. — V. 14. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die. Call Joshua, and present yourselves in the Tabernacle of the Congregation that I may give him a charge,** the direct divine appointment to his office as leader of the people. **And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.** V. 15. **And the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud,** Ex. 33, 9; **and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the Tabernacle,** in demonstration of God's majesty and power. V. 16. **And the Lord said unto Moses,** in a special discourse addressed to him alone, although in the presence of Joshua, **Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers,** lie down in the sleep of death to await the great day of resurrection; **and this people will rise up and go a-whoring,** in every loathsome form of spiritual adultery, **after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go to be among them,** it being implied that they would not exterminate all the Canaanitish tribes, **and will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with them.** V. 17. **Then My anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them,** thus shutting them out from all mercy; **and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them,** literally "find them," as though after a deliberate search; **so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?** This realization would be forced upon them, and they would pronounce their judgment with their own mouths. V. 18. **And I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils,** in punishment of all the sins and transgressions, **which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods,** the sin of idolatry being the basis of all other transgressions of God's holy Law. V. 19. **Now, therefore, write ye,** Moses and Joshua, **this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel,** in the form inspired and dictated by the Lord; **put it in their mouths, that this song,** which follows in the next chapter, **may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.** The manner in which the song should be used as a witness is now explained. V. 20. **For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey, and they**

shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat, under the rich blessings of Jehovah, **then will they turn unto other gods and serve them,** as the Lord foresees and knows, **and provoke Me, and break My covenant,** by a particularly contemptuous, insulting rejection. V. 21. **And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness,** for in singing the praises of God's mercy it would remind them of their base ingratitude, and in holding out mercy to them in case they would repent, it would put them to shame; **for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed,** being transmitted after the manner of a folk-song, it would live on among the people; **for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware;** the Lord was aware, by virtue of His omniscience, that they would realize their evil intentions and perform their idolatrous purpose. V. 22. **Moses therefore wrote this song the same day,** obeying the divine command, as narrated in detail below, **and taught it the children of Israel.** V. 23. **And He,** Jehovah, **gave Joshua, the son of Nun, a charge and said, Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them; and I will be with thee.** Thus the Lord Himself, formally and solemnly, inducted Joshua into office, by assuring him of His permanent assistance. V. 24. **And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a book until they were finished,** v. 25. **that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord,** the priests of the tribe of Levi charged with this special work, **saying,** v. 26. **Take this book of the Law,** the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, as Moses had written it to this point, **and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, your God,** to be stored and kept safe in that sacred chest, **that it may be there for a witness against thee.** It was a commentary upon the Decalog, and would testify against Israel in the case of every transgression. V. 27. **For I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck,** the callous and disobedient disposition of the people. **Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death?** Moses now formally gave the book of the Law into the charge of the Levitical priests, together with the song which he composed by the inspiration of Jehovah. V. 28. **Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes and your officers,** as the representatives of the people, **that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them,** chap. 30, 19. V. 29. **For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves,** for so Moses had just been informed by Jehovah, **and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands,** their idols and their idolatrous practises. V. 30. **And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song,** as given in the next chapter, **until they were ended.** The great leader of Israel was faithful to the end, as a shining example to all whom the Lord places into positions of authority.

CHAPTER 32.

The Song of Moses.

ISRAEL'S POSITION AND APOSTASY. — V. 1. **Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth!** Heaven and earth are not only called upon as witnesses in the event of Israel's future apostasy, but they are concerned also inasmuch as God's faithfulness and righteousness are revealed in heaven and in earth, the entire universe being filled by every exhibition of His glory. V. 2. **My doctrine shall drop as the rain,** the gentle and persistent rain which brings forth fruit in abundance; **my speech shall distil,** gently flow, **as the dew, as the small rain,** mild showers, **upon the tender herb,** as it breaks forth from the buds in the spring, **and as the showers upon the grass,** upon the young vegetation. That was to be the effect of Moses' song upon the hearts of the people, like that of a mild and fructifying rain. V. 3. **Because I will publish the name of the Lord,** proclaim, preach of His name; **ascribe ye greatness unto our God;** in their entire life, in words and deeds, they were to show that they acknowledged His exalted nature, His glory as Jehovah. V. 4. **He is the Rock,** the unchangeable, unshakable Refuge, Protection, and Security for the forsaken and for all those that believe in Him; **His work is perfect,** without a single defect; **for all His ways,** His manner of dealing with men in the world, **are judgment,** in perfect agreement with justice; **a God of truth,** upon whom one may depend in all the vicissitudes of life, **and without iniquity, just and right is He,** falseness, crooked dealing, is absolutely foreign to Him. But the very opposite is true of the children of Israel. V. 5. **They have corrupted them-**

selves, namely, in the various apostasies and rebellions charged against them since the days of Sinai; **their spot is not the spot of His children,** literally, "not His children, but their blemish," that is, all the rebellious people did not really belong to the children of Jehovah, but were properly considered a stain and a blemish upon the congregation of the Lord; **they are a perverse and crooked generation.** Cp. Is. 1, 4. V. 6. **Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?** Instead of showing their appreciation of God's kindness and mercy by worshiping Him and clinging to Him, they showed themselves an arrogant people, devoid of all real understanding. **Is not He thy Father that hath bought thee,** acquiring them as His own by the many manifestations of His goodness? **Hath He not made thee and established thee?** The miraculous deliverance of the children of Israel from the power of Pharaoh had been followed by the covenant of Sinai and by their acceptance as His peculiar people. V. 7. **Remember the days of old,** the period of the Egyptian bondage and beyond, **consider the years of many generations,** the experiences which one generation after the other had had under the guidance of Jehovah; **ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee,** they were in a position to tell the younger generation of God's wonderful dealings with them, all of which were to be kept in mind always by all members of the nation. V. 8. **When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.** From the very beginning it was a work of God's providence, of His government of the earth, to give to each tribe and nation as it was formed and as it grew, a place, a country, with boundaries; and He always had in mind the needs of that people whom He intended to choose for Himself, so that Israel should possess a land corresponding to its population. V. 9. **For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot,** the surveyed land, the possession, **of His inheritance.** In this people, therefore, He took a special interest, to it He gave countless proofs of His fatherly love and care. V. 10. **He found him in a desert land,** in a most helpless and disconsolate position, **and in the waste, howling wilderness,** where only the dismal and terrifying cry of wild animals could be heard, all of which is added to emphasize the position of Israel at that time. **He led him about,** He compassed him with the fulness of His loving care; **He instructed him,** without letting him out of His sight for as much as a moment; **He kept him as the apple of His eye,** with the most delicate tenderness. V. 11. **As an eagle stirreth up her nest,** in encouraging the young to make an attempt at flying, **fluttereth over her young,** ready to save the weak and helpless, whose wings are not yet fully grown, from a bad fall, **spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings,** v. 12. **so the Lord alone did lead him,** the people of Israel, **and there was no strange god with him.** Jehovah being their only Helper and Stay, the children of Israel were under obligation to serve Him alone as God. It is a remarkable picture showing the loving care of Jehovah in leading the people forward to the proper independence. V. 13. **He made him ride on the high places of the earth,** as the victorious conquerors of the land, **that he might eat the increase of the fields,** the rich products, all the wealth of the fruitful land; **and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock,** an expressive description of the productiveness of Canaan's soil; v. 14. **butter of kine,** including all the products gained from milk, **and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan,** noted for their excellence in every respect, **and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat,** figurative for the finest and most nourishing grain; **and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape,** unexcelled wine, full of fire and refreshment. Thus the various acts of God's mercy and goodness are enumerated, in sharp contrast to the apostasy which is now described. V. 15. **But Jeshurun,** the people of righteousness, as they are called to remind them of God's loving and honoring plans for their permanent advancement as the just and righteous among the nations of the world, **waxed fat, and kicked,** like an ox that is fed too well, like a horse that feels his oats, Is. 10, 27; **thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness,** as Moses, in turning directly to the people, applies the figure; **then he forsook God, which made him,** deliberately rejecting his Creator, **and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation,** who not only had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, but wanted to be their Redeemer from all spiritual dangers as well. V. 16. **They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods,** by forgetting the relation of faithfulness which the covenant laid upon them, **with abominations provoked they Him to anger.** V. 17. **They sacrificed unto devils,** to demons, to wasters or destroyers, for thus the evil and harmful character of the heathen deities was often indicated; **to gods whom they knew not,** who neither by benefit nor by blessing had manifested themselves as true gods, **to new gods that came newly up,** but recently invented and accepted by the Israelites, **whom your fathers feared not,** for whom they felt no reverential awe, since they are mere products of the imagination. V. 18. **Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.** They had shown themselves coolly neglectful against Him whose care had partaken of the love of both father

and mother toward them. They were thus unnatural children, an evil and perverse generation, a warning to all believers who are growing cold toward the rich blessings of God's grace.

JEHOVAH'S SENTENCE AND ITS EXECUTION. — V. 19. **And when the Lord saw it,** by the testimony of His own personal observation, **He abhorred them,** He rejected them with a feeling of bitterness, **because of the provoking,** the vexation, the grief, **of His sons and of His daughters.** The behavior of the children of Israel caused the Lord to plan their rejection with a severe punishment. V. 20. **And He said, I will hide My face from them,** withdraw His mercy, be inaccessible to all their pleading for mercy. **I will see what their end shall be,** for their apostasy was bound to bring them everlasting destruction; **for they are a very froward generation,** perverse, wicked, **children in whom is no faith,** upon whom one cannot depend. V. 21. **They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God,** by turning and clinging to idols of men's imagination; **they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities,** literally, "their nothingnesses," Lev. 19, 4; **and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people,** by turning in mercy to such as did not belong to the chosen nation; **I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,** by laying the blessing rejected by Israel upon a people who till then were godless. Cp. Rom. 10, 19. V. 22. **For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains;** for the judgment of God, as realized in the course of the centuries, not only upon Israel, but upon all those that rejected Him, in every form of severe punishment, extends beyond the earthly life and continues throughout eternity. V. 23. **I will heap mischiefs upon them,** evils of every kind; **I will send Mine arrows upon them,** use them up in bringing retribution upon them. V. 24. **They shall be burned with hunger,** become thin for lack of food, **and devoured with burning heat,** with a consuming pestilence, **and with bitter destruction,** an infectious epidemic; **I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them,** raging beasts of prey, **with the poison of serpents of the dust.** Cp. Lev. 26, 22. V. 25. **The sword without and terror within,** on account of the utter helplessness and the terrible fate which would await them in the hands of the victorious and cruel enemy, **shall destroy both the young man and the virgin,** cutting them off in the bloom of their youth, **the suckling also with the man of gray hairs,** the land thus being bereaved of its inhabitants. V. 26. **I said I would scatter them into corners,** blow them away, exterminate them, **I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men;** v. 27. **were it not that I feared the wrath of,** that is, over, **the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely,** misunderstanding or ignoring the fact that Jehovah's interference and not their power had destroyed Israel, **and lest they should say, Our hand is high,** has shown itself mighty, **and the Lord hath not done all this.** The transgression of Israel would be such as to merit annihilation, and it would be only the probable arrogance of the enemy in ascribing to themselves the punishment which was God's alone that would prevent His carrying out that intention. V. 28. **For they,** Israel, **are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them;** they were utterly lacking in spiritual insight and wisdom. V. 29. **O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!** Complete destruction is their inevitable lot if Jehovah for His name's sake does not turn away His wrath. V. 30. **How should one chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?** If they would only cling to Jehovah, the Rock of their salvation, then it would be a small matter for them to overthrow all their enemies; but now their apostasy would result in their being sold into the power of their enemies, deprived of all their strength by the Lord. V. 31. **For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.** The heathen themselves were obliged to confess that the gods in whom they put their trust could not really be compared with Jehovah, the true God. V. 32. **For their vine,** that upon which Israel was placing its trust, **is the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah,** Is. 1, 10; 3, 9; Jer. 23, 14; **their grapes are grapes of gall,** on account of the bitterness of their transgressions, **their clusters are bitter;** v. 33. **their vine is the poison of dragons,** of serpents, **and the cruel venom of asps,** of a very poisonous, deadly snake. Thus the vine and its fruits are a picture of the people and of its works. Cp. Is. 5, 2—4. In this entire section the punishment upon Sodom is suggested, as the formal announcement of the coming judgment, which now follows, indicates. V. 34. **Is not this laid up in store with Me,** both the sins of the people and the judgments of God, **and sealed up among My treasures?** The registers of guilt were still secret, but would be opened in due time. V. 35. **To Me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time,** at that time, when the foot would begin to be uncertain, when their fall would be imminent, then God would prove Himself the avenger, the rewarder, then the secrets with regard to their punishment, which He had kept hidden, would be revealed. **For the day of**

their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste; then the judgment, the vengeance of God, would strike Israel, bringing them to the verge of destruction. V. 36. **For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for** (comfort) **His servants,** by punishing those who are only outward members of His people, and by saving those who are found true worshipers of Jehovah, **when He seeth that their power is gone,** when all the earthly props of Israel's power upon which it relied are taken away, **and there is none shut up or left,** that is, all men, all defenders, both married and single, are taken away. V. 37. **And He shall say,** when He has thus brought punishment upon His people and avenged Himself upon His enemies in their midst, **Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted,** v. 38. **which,** namely, the idols of the false Israelites, **did eat the fat of their sacrifices,** accepting what the foolish Israelites consecrated to them, **and drank the wine of their drink-offerings? Let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.** Thus the helplessness and vanity of the idols are brought out. V. 39. **See now,** by contemplating the fate which struck the foolish idolaters, **that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me;** Jehovah alone is the true God. **I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand.** To Him, as the almighty God, pertains the absolute power over the creatures of His hand. V. 40. **For I lift up My hand to heaven,** in the gesture of one swearing a solemn oath, **and say, I live forever.** V. 41. **If I whet My glittering sword,** in the capacity of champion of His people, **and Mine hand take hold on judgment,** namely, for the purpose of carrying it out, **I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me,** punish all the godless, not only among the heathen, but also among the Israelites. V. 42. **I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh,** a very strong figure denoting the complete overthrow of the enemies; **and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy,** literally, "from the unbarbered head of the enemy," said of one possessing vigorous strength and exhibiting proud arrogance. V. 43. **Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people,** since all men are included in God's love; **for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land and to His people.** By the punishment of the bold offenders and by the extirpation of idolatry God intended to expiate the guilt resting upon His people and their country, and thus to consecrate and sanctify both the land and the people, His congregation of believers. Thus Moses, at the end of his song, prophesies of the Church of the New Testament, which will serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness.

Conclusion of Moses' Address. The Lord's Command to Him. — V. 44. **And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people,** chap. 31, 22, **he and Hoshea, the son of Nun,** for so Joshua, who probably wrote this account, modestly calls himself. He assisted Moses, and Israel could see that the two were in entire accord. V. 45. **And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel,** his entire proclamation herewith came to an end; v. 46. **and he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day,** through which I lay down my testimony, **which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this Law.** Note that the obligation to impart the instruction of the Law to the children is here again stressed. V. 47. **For it is not a vain thing for you,** an empty, meaningless proclamation; **because it is your life,** chap. 30, 20; **and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.** The promise of temporal blessings is again included, but in a manner which points forward to the enjoyment of everlasting happiness, in the life with Him. V. 48. **And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,** v. 49. **Get thee up into this mountain Abarim,** the range which runs parallel with the Jordan and the Dead Sea, **unto Mount Nebo,** the highest peak of the range, **which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession;** v. 50. **and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people,** an expression which implies the immortality of the soul; **as Aaron, thy brother, died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people,** Num. 20, 28; v. 51. **because ye trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin,** Num. 20, 11—13; **because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel.** Their rebellion had consisted in their expressing a doubt of the Lord's willingness to give water to such a rebellious people, whereas the Lord had intended to make this miracle a proof of His majesty and almighty power. V. 52. **Yet thou shalt see the land before thee,** namely, from the top of Mount Nebo, where, on a clear day, a view of practically the entire country of Canaan may be obtained; **but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.** Thus the Lord visits the transgressions of His children with punishments which are often severe, but finally he grants them a blessed end and causes them to be added to the great number of those that died in the faith.

CHAPTER 33.

The Blessing of Moses.

As the aged patriarch Jacob laid his blessing upon his sons in the form of prophecies, so Moses, before being gathered to his people, spoke a prophetic blessing upon the people whose leader he had been for forty years. By the inspiration of God he was able to foretell the fortunes of the individual tribes, both as an encouragement and as a warning to them. V. 1. **And this is the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God,** who was distinguished by this honoring title, **blessed the children of Israel before his death.** V. 2. **And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints.** This is a description of the majesty and glory of God, as He appeared to Israel when He gave them the Law from Mount Sinai. While His majesty was concentrated on the summit of Sinai, the entire surrounding country reflected the wonderful light of His countenance. From Seir, the mountains of the Edomites on the east, to the cliffs of Paran in the west the entire wilderness glowed as at the rising of the sun. The Lord came forth from the midst, and was accompanied by myriads of angels, Acts 7, 53; Heb. 2, 2; Gal. 3, 19. **From His right hand went a fiery Law for them,** said of the fiery missiles of the bolts of lightning, as they emphasized the giving of the Law. V. 3. **Yea, He loved the people,** or, How dearly He loved the people! **All His saints are in Thy hand;** He who has even the angels in His power, to do His will, cherishes a deep affection for all those that are truly His own, that belong to His spiritual Israel. **And they sat down at Thy feet,** ready to follow wherever the Lord led them; **every one shall receive of Thy words,** prepared to arise and to serve Him in cheerful obedience. V. 4. **Moses,** who here enters into the spirit of his blessing so thoroughly as to place himself entirely upon the standpoint of the people, **commanded us a Law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob,** for the Law was to be the property, the treasure of Israel, to be guarded and observed by them with all faithfulness. V. 5. **And He,** Jehovah, **was King in Jeshurun,** the people of righteousness, **when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together,** namely, at Mount Sinai. V. 6. **Let Reuben live and not die, and let [not] his men be few.** Reuben had forfeited his right of the first-born, Gen. 49, 3. 4, and while his tribe did not become extinct in Israel, it was neither in number nor in power so great as many of the other tribes. Simeon is not mentioned at all, because this tribe, Gen. 49, 7, was divided in Canaan, receiving only a few cities within the boundaries of Judah for an inheritance. V. 7. **And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people,** for this tribe, as the champion of the nation, was a leader in the wars and therefore would pray for a safe return; **let his hands be sufficient for him,** namely, in waging the wars of Jehovah; **and be Thou an help to him from his enemies,** saving him from their wrath. The underlying thought seems to be a longing for the time and the dominion of the Messiah with its eternal blessing. V. 8. **And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim,** Ex. 28, 30, the guarantee that the Lord would ever protect the rights of His people by revealing to the priests His holy will and the manner in which they were to comport themselves, **be with thy holy one,** with the tribe of Levi, from which the high priest was consecrated to the Lord, **whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah,** Ex. 17, 1—7; Num. 20, 1—13; for although the people, in either instance, murmured against the Lord, yet the Lord made use of both occurrences to test their faith; v. 9. **who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children; for they have observed Thy Word and kept Thy covenant.** Not only once, but repeatedly the Levites proved that they were ready to deny the bonds of the nearest relationship in the interest of God's honor, as after the worship of the golden calf, Ex. 32, 26—29, and in the matter of the zeal of Phinehas, Num. 25, 8. Therefore Moses praises their service in the worship of Jehovah. V. 10. **They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments and Israel Thy Law;** for that was an important part of their work, Lev. 10, 11; **they shall put incense before Thee and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar.** Although only the priests, strictly speaking, offered sacrifices, yet the Levites were the ministering assistants, and therefore the entire tribe could here be mentioned. V. 11. **Bless, Lord, his substance,** his strength or power, **and accept the work of his hands,** looking upon it with pleasure. **Smite through the loins of them that rise against him,** thus crippling them, rendering them utterly helpless, **and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.** Just as great as the blessings of Jehovah were upon Levi, so great was His curse to be upon those that presumed to question his priesthood. V. 12. **And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord,** the special friend and darling of Jehovah, **shall dwell in safety by Him,** as a dwelling founded upon the Lord; **and the Lord shall cover him all the day long,** be his constant Protector; **and he shall dwell between His**

shoulders, as a son who is carried on his father's back. V. 13. **And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven,** the rich blessings which would come upon it from above, **for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,** the waters under the ground, which fed the springs and rivers, v. 14. **and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun,** produced and matured by his kindly heat, **and for the precious things put forth by the moon,** matured in the course of the year, as one month followed the other, v. 15. **and for the chief things,** the summits, **of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,** the great forests and thickets clothing the mountain ranges, v. 16. **and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof,** whatever the earth produces in precious gifts, **and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush,** who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Ex. 3, 2. 4. **Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren,** the most eminent or illustrious of the sons of Jacob. V. 17. **His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns,** of the fierce wild-ox; he would occupy a position of such power as to be able to trample on all his enemies; **with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.** The power of Ephraim especially, but also of Manasseh, was afterwards such as to give to the tribe of Joseph the leadership in the northern nation. V. 18. **And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out,** since he would be successful in his campaigns, as well as in his shipping and his commercial interests; **and, Issachar, in thy tents,** in the grazing and agricultural pursuits. V. 19. **They shall call the people unto the mountain,** invite them to share their prosperity, to take part in their rich sacrificial meals on the hill of the Lord's Sanctuary. **There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness,** bring such offerings as would establish their fellowship with Jehovah; **for they,** not only these two tribes, but the entire nation, **shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand,** the riches of both the sea and of the mines of the dry land would flow into the coffers of Israel. V. 20. **And of Gad he said, Blessed be He that enlargeth Gad,** the Lord who gave to this tribe a large and rich territory; **he dwelleth as a lion,** having the nature of a lion in battle, **and teareth the arm with the crown of the head,** he is so fierce in battle that he inflicts not only dangerous, but mortal wounds. V. 21. **And he provided the first part for himself,** a place of habitation as befitted a leader of the tribes, **because there, in a portion of the lawgiver,** of the leader, **was he seated,** this fine region was expressly set aside for him; **and he came with the heads of the people,** joined them in the campaign west of Jordan, **he executed the justice of the Lord, and His judgments with Israel,** in fulfilling the precepts of Jehovah, for herein the righteousness of the people consisted. V. 22. **And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp,** with all the latter's fierceness and sinuous strength in battle; **he shall leap from Bashan,** as did the lions and leopards in attacking the herds of cattle in that land of rich meadows. V. 23. **And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,** with the good will of the Lord, **and full with the blessing of the Lord; possess thou the west and the south,** a region which combined the advantages of a location near the sea, the Mediterranean, with a mild climate, for the Sea of Galilee was his eastern boundary. V. 24. **And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children,** or, more fortunate than the sons, exceptionally blessed; **let him be acceptable to his brethren,** as their good will and that of Jehovah rested upon him, **and let him dip his foot in oil,** namely, by the possession and enjoyment of a very rich inheritance in Canaan. V. 25. **Thy shoes shall be iron and brass,** his fortresses, castles, should be of strong metal, his dwellings should be as strong and impregnable as if built of iron; **and as thy days, so shall thy strength be,** he should preserve his youthful strength throughout his life and thus be able to defend himself successfully against all attacks. And now Moses, in summarizing, rises to the very heights of poetical fervor. V. 26. **There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun,** Israel, the people of righteousness, **who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky,** always ready to hurry to Israel's assistance with almighty power. V. 27. **The eternal God is thy Refuge,** literally, "dwelling is the God of eternity," of olden times; not only does He offer to His people the protection, the refuge, of His almighty power, but also that of a secure dwelling-place in Him who has proved His kindness and mercy a thousand times; **and underneath are the everlasting arms;** He who sits upon the throne of His majesty in the heavens is at the same time on the earth with all the loving care of a mother holding her children in her arms, or of an eagle bearing her young on her pinions, chap. 32, 11. **And He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say, Destroy him.** This is true of all the enemies of Israel, of the congregation of the Lord. V. 28. **Israel then shall dwell in safety alone,** separate from other people and secure in the protection of Jehovah; **the foun-**

tain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, in a rich and fertile country; **also his heavens shall drop down dew,** provide sufficient moisture for all purposes, as much as the land required. V. 29. **Happy art thou, O Israel,** endowed with salvation! **Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy help; and who is the Sword of thy excellency,** a weapon both of protection and of attack? **And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee,** they would simulate friendship in order to escape annihilation; **and thou shalt tread upon their high places,** in a great triumph over all opponents. The spiritual Israel, the congregation of believers in the New Testament, are the people of salvation in the full sense of the word, having been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, Eph. 1, 3.

CHAPTER 34.

The Death and Burial of Moses.

MOSES DIES AND IS BURIED BY GOD. — V. 1. **And Moses went up from the Plains of Moab,** where the children of Israel were still encamped, **unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah,** that is, to its very summit, **that is over against Jericho.** Cp. chap. 32, 48—51. **And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead,** on the eastern side of Jordan, **unto Dan,** a town in Northern Perea, v. 2. **and all Naphtali,** later the land of Galilee, **and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh,** in the approximate center of Canaan, **and all the land of Judah,** directly opposite his station, **unto the utmost sea,** the Mediterranean Sea, v. 3. **and the south,** the plains beyond the Dead Sea, **and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees,** for these grew in the lowlands of Jericho, **unto Zoar,** at the extreme southern end of the Dead Sea. This viewing of the entire country was a "proof of his generally unimpaired strength of vision, which the soaring flight of faith rendered more penetrating." V. 4. **And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed,** Gen. 12, 7; 15, 18; 28, 13; **I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes,** it was a last favor which the Lord granted to His faithful servant, **but thou shalt not go over thither.** V. 5. **So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab,** namely, on Mount Nebo, **according to the word of the Lord,** chap. 32, 50. V. 6. **And He,** the Lord, **buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor,** in some mountain valley not far from Nebo; **but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day,** its exact location was not revealed. From the letter of Jude, v. 9, we know that the archangel Michael contended with the devil for the body of Moses. Thus God, through His angel, saved the body of Moses from the last consequence of death under the control of Satan, from corruption. The body of Moses was taken to heaven after his burial and there changed to a spiritual body. Thus it was possible for Moses to appear with Elijah at the transfiguration of Christ. This fact gives us a strong guarantee for the final fulfilment of our hope, of the resurrection of the body.

AN APPRECIATION OF MOSES. — V. 7. **And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim,** he had lost nothing of his keen bodily vision, **nor his natural force abated,** he had retained his full strength until the end. V. 8. **And the children of Israel wept for Moses,** held a great mourning for him, **in the Plains of Moab thirty days; so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended,** a fine expression of their appreciation of this great prophet of the Lord, which is properly copied by grateful congregations and larger church-bodies to this day. V. 9. **And Joshua, the son of Nun,** who now took up the leadership of the children of Israel, **was full of the spirit of wisdom,** as it was needed for the practical problems of life; **for Moses had laid his hands upon him,** Num. 27, 18. 23; **and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.** That was the result of the long years of work which Moses had spent in teaching the people. V. 10. **And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,** Ex. 33, 11; Num. 12, 6. 8, with whom Jehovah was on such intimate terms, whom He filled with such divine power, v. 11. **in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,** v. 12. **and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel,** during the entire wilderness journey. Only one prophet is greater than Moses, by his own testimony, namely, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. Through His life, suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation He earned for us the eternal redemption from the power of death and hell.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Joshua, so named from its principal character, the successor of Moses, under whose leadership the conquest of Canaan was successfully carried out, covers a period of about twenty-five years (B. C. 1450 to 1425). It takes up the history of Israel after the death of Moses, begins with the commission of the Lord to Joshua, describes in detail the campaigns of the army of Israel, the great successes as well as the occasional reverses, and finally gives an account of the last addresses of Joshua, of his farewell, and of his death. The work entrusted to Joshua was one requiring great intellectual and tactical ability, but above all an unwavering trust in God. Canaan was occupied by great nations and strong, inhabiting strongly fortified cities and able to place armies in the field consisting of skilled warriors. Joshua was fully qualified for the task set before him, since he had not only been associated with Moses during the entire wilderness journey, but was also full of the spirit of wisdom, Deut. 34, 9, possessed of true military ability, and had perfect faith in the word and promise of God, this trust being the source of all his strength and courage.

The chief object of the book is to offer the historical proof of the faithfulness with which God fulfilled the promise made to the patriarchs that He would give the land of Canaan to His chosen people. Accordingly, we are told how the Lord helped Joshua and Israel conquer and occupy Canaan: He led them through the Jordan on dry ground; He fought for them against the heathen inhabitants of Canaan; He drove those wicked, immoral, and foul nations out from before them; He divided the land by lot among the victorious tribes of Israel, and brought them to rest in that "good land flowing with milk and honey."

So far as the author is concerned, the Book of Joshua was probably not written by this great leader himself, although some of the sections, especially the reports of the division of the land, were undoubtedly copied from his notes. Events are related in the book which did not take place until after the death of Joshua, such as Caleb's taking possession of his inheritance at Hebron, chap. 15, 13—19, cp. with Judg. 1, 10—15, the taking of the city of Laish by the Danites, chap. 19, 47, cp. with Judg. 18. Nevertheless, the writer was a contemporary of Joshua, who probably survived him for many years, and it is assumed that one of the elders who entered Canaan with Joshua wrote the book, chap. 5, 1. The very latest date which may be accepted for the composition of the book is that of the time of Samuel, and there are some believing scholars who have regarded this prophet as the author.[1]

1) *Concordia Bible Class*, 1919, 31—34; Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 26. 27.

CHAPTER 1.

Joshua Assumes Command of Israel.

Joshua Formally Commissioned. — V. 1. **Now, after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord,** after the completion of the thirty days' mourning for this great prophet whom the Lord so signally distinguished, Num. 12, 7. 8; Deut. 34, 5. 8, **it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister,** not his servant, but his assistant, who had been pointed out some time before as the successor of Moses, Num. 27, 15—23, had been expressly designated as such by Moses, Deut. 31, 7, and had appeared before the people in that capacity, **saying,** v. 2. **Moses, My servant, is dead; now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel,** for Canaan proper was always spoken of as including the territory west of the Jordan only. These words were not spoken to Joshua through the high priest's Urim and Thummim, upon which he had been told to rely in case of difficult questions, Num. 27, 21, but were an immediate revelation of the divine will, in the same way in which the Lord had communicated with Moses. V. 3. **Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses,** Deut. 11, 24. V. 4. **From the wilderness,** the Desert of Arabia on the south and southeast, **and this Lebanon,** the mountain range in the north, **even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites,** who apparently had been overlords of this entire region at one time and were still occupying the country northwest of the Sea of Chinnereth, afterward that of Galilee, **and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun,** the Mediterranean Sea, **shall be your coast.** Cp. Deut. 11, 24. 25. V. 5. **There shall not any man,** namely, of the kings and inhabitants of the country, **be able to stand before thee,** withstand him successfully, **all the days of thy life,** Deut. 31, 8. **As I was with Moses, so I will be**

with thee; I will not fail thee, let him sink down in helplessness by withdrawing his hand, **nor forsake thee.** V. 6. **Be strong,** firm, mighty in the trust of Jehovah, **and of a good courage,** altogether undismayed; he must lay hold boldly and with a strong hand, and when he has done so, allow nothing to drive him from his position of firm adherence to Jehovah; **for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them.** Cp. Deut. 31, 7. 23. This condition is still further expanded. V. 7. **Only be thou strong and very courageous,** said with greater emphasis than in v. 6, **that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law which Moses, My servant, commanded thee,** for the leader of the people must be an example to all his followers. **Turn not from it,** namely, from the roll of the written Law as it was preserved in the Ark of the Covenant, **to the right hand or to the left,** as the slightest deviation was a transgression, **that thou mayest prosper,** make use of the proper wisdom and thus be successful, **whithersoever thou goest.** V. 8. **This book of the Law,** as it had been written by Moses and delivered into the hands of the priests, Deut. 31, 26, **shall not depart out of thy mouth,** he should teach it, study it, discuss it; **but thou shalt meditate therein day and night,** trying to penetrate ever more deeply into its scope and meaning, and thus becoming qualified to speak more clearly, pointedly, and powerfully to the people, **that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein,** namely, in the thoughts of the heart and in the deeds of the hands; **for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous,** make headway on the path of duty before him, **and then thou shalt have good success,** because of the application of practical wisdom given by the Lord. The Lord now summarizes His charge to Joshua, introducing it by a rhetorical question for the sake of greater effect. V. 9. **Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest.** Thus the assurance gains in strength when to the positive command to be courageous is added the negative to lay aside all fear, as in Deut. 31, 6. 8. We Christians have a similar promise of victory over all our enemies and the eventual enjoyment of the heavenly happiness. But we also have the command of God to read, study, and hear the Word of God to arrange our whole life in accordance with its precepts. Then we also shall have success in the things we undertake under the guidance of God.

THE FIRST GENERAL ORDER OF JOSHUA. — V. 10. **Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,** v. 11. **Pass through the host and command the people, for as** keepers of the genealogical records they were also superintendents of the mustering and were primarily concerned with any order pertaining to the mobilizing of the army, **saying, Prepare you victuals,** food for a journey or campaign; **for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan,** along whose eastern banks their encampment extended, **to go in to possess the land which the Lord, your God, giveth you to possess it.** This order went forth on the seventh of Nisan, chap. 4, 19. V. 12. **And to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh spake Joshua, saying,** v. 13. **Remember the word which Moses, the servant of the Lord,** this being the usual manner in which he is now referred to, **commanded you, saying, The Lord, your God, hath given you rest,** having permitted them to settle in peace, **and hath given you this land,** they had their possession on the east side of Jordan. V. 14. **Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed,** fully equipped and arrayed in battle order, **all the mighty men of valor, and help them,** v. 15. **until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as He hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord, your God, giveth them. Then ye shall return unto the land of your possession and enjoy it,** make use of all the owners' privileges, **which Moses, the Lord's servant, gave you on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising.** Cp. Num. 32, 17—27. V. 16. **And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go,** a fine expression of allegiance and loyalty, of obedience and brotherly love. V. 17. **According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only the Lord, thy God, be with thee as He was with Moses.** With this assurance and guarantee they were ready to follow Joshua anywhere. V. 18. **Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death; only be strong and of a good courage,** a call with which the two and one half tribes intended to give Joshua the assurance which he needed at the beginning of his difficult work that he could depend upon the people whom the Lord had given into his charge. In the New Covenant it is also the will of God that His children help one another in the severe spiritual battles which they must fight, giving one another all possible encouragement at all times. They are assured, even now, of eventual entrance into their rest. "He who follows the Word of God acts wisely and happily, but he who follows his own reason acts unwisely and to no profit." (Luther.)

CHAPTER 2.

Spies Sent to Jericho.

THE SPIES AT RAHAB'S HOUSE. — V. 1. **And Joshua, the son of Nun, sent out of Shittim,** a town in Moabitis, where he had his headquarters, this probably having taken place even before the officers of the host made the proclamation throughout the camp, **two men to spy secretly,** this having reference both to the manner in which the command was given, and the form in which it was carried out, saying, **Go view the land, even Jericho,** both the city and its vicinity. Jericho was located in a beautiful and fertile valley, noted for its palm-trees, some six to eight miles from the Jordan, and the entire neighborhood was thickly settled. **And they went and came into an harlot's house,** where their stay would arouse the least suspicion, **named Rahab, and lodged there,** prepared to stay there overnight. V. 2. **And it was told the king of Jericho,** probably by some of the watch who had marked the coming of the strangers, **saying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the country.** This was the natural conclusion which the men of Jericho would reach in finding men of Israel in their city. V. 3. **And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house; for they be come to search out all the country.** The king's messengers did not search her house, but made their demand at the door, relying on her supposed loyalty to produce the spies. V. 4. **And the woman took the two men and hid them,** just as soon as the servant in charge of the door had informed her of the identity of the callers, whereupon she appeared at the door in person, **and said thus, There came men unto me,** literally, "True, there came to me men," **but I wist not whence they were;** v. 5. **and it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out,** for the gates were closed at sunset, and the short twilight was rapidly succeeded by the falling of darkness; she implied that the spies must have taken advantage of the dusk to make their escape. **Whither the men went I wot** (know) **not; pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.** V. 6. **But she had brought them up to the roof of the house,** those of the Orient being flat and usually parapeted, **and hid them with the stalks of flax,** unbroken lengths spread out there for the purpose of drying, **which she had laid in order upon the roof.** V. 7. **And the men,** the king's messengers, **pursued after them,** the spies, **the way to Jordan unto the fords,** where they were most likely to cross; **and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they,** the keepers, the watchmen, **shut the gate,** to prevent the escape of the spies, if they were still in the city. The obvious terror which had taken hold of the king of Jericho showed that the judgment of the Lord upon the Canaanites had already begun, for it was He who took their courage from them.

THE SPIES SAVED BY RAHAB. — V. 8. **And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof,** where they were preparing to pass the night; v. 9. **and she said unto the men, I know that the Lord,** Jehovah, of whom she had heard and toward whom she felt a reverential awe, **hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us,** namely, the fear that they would be exterminated by Israel, Deut. 2, 25; 11, 25, **and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you,** are terrified and utterly discouraged by the obvious assistance which Jehovah had rendered His people. V. 10. **For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt,** Ex. 14, 21; **and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed,** Num. 21, 21—35. V. 11. **And as soon as we had heard these things,** for Rahab here asserts of all her countrymen what she herself felt, **our hearts did melt,** said of complete discouragement, **neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you,** they found it impossible to raise a bit of spirit, either to think, plan, or act, so great was their terror; **for the Lord, your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath.** Thus Rahab, in concluding, confessed her faith in Jehovah, the true God. It is strange that the miracles of God's almighty power, which wrought faith in the heart of this great sinner, caused the unbelieving hearts of the other Canaanites to become hardened and thus to be condemned to the judgment of death, of extermination. V. 12. **Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness,** in hiding them from the king's messengers, **that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house and give me a true token,** some sign of truth by which they would guarantee immunity to her and her relatives in the general extermination which was sure to come; v. 13. **and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have,** her entire relationship, **and deliver our lives from death.** The sign of truth which she demanded was the solemn oath that they would save the lives of all her kin. V. 14. **And the men answered her, Our life for yours,** literally, "our souls instead of yours to die" (they pledged their very souls for the truth of their promise to spare Rahab and her relatives), **if ye utter not this our**

business, that is, if she would not betray them while they were on their way back to the camp of Israel. **And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee,** show her this mercy and faithfulness, and save her life. V. 15. **Then she let them down by a cord,** a strong rope, **through the window; for her house was upon the town wall,** built right against it, **and she dwelt upon the wall,** her chamber overhung the wall. V. 16. **And she said unto them** as they stood below after their escape from the city, **Get you to the mountain,** a wild cliff north of Jericho, **lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned; and afterward may ye go your way.** Being familiar with the distances and all possible roads, she was able to give the spies this shrewd bit of advice. V. 17. **And the men said unto her,** in order to obviate the danger of a false interpretation of their promise and oath, **We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear,** namely, unless she would do as they now directed her to act. V. 18. **Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread,** a thin, but strong rope, such as surveyors used, probably the one by which they had made their escape, **in the window which thou didst let us down by; and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household,** who apparently were living in their own homes, **home unto thee,** thus having them all together in one house. V. 19. **And it shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street,** anywhere outside, **his blood shall be upon his head,** it would be his own fault if some soldier of Israel would strike him down, **and we will be guiltless; and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head if any hand be upon him,** in that case they would assume the blame. That was the second condition. V. 20. **And if thou utter this our business,** in betraying them after their departure, **then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.** This third condition was really only a repetition of the chief condition made at the time they swore the oath, v. 14. V. 21. **And she said, According unto your words, so be it.** She agreed to all the conditions. **And she sent them away, and they departed; and she bound the scarlet line in the window,** namely, when she found that she needed it for the stipulated purpose. V. 22. **And they went and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned; and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way,** on every road which they could possibly have taken, **but found them not.** V. 23. **So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over,** over the river Jordan, **and came to Joshua, the son of Nun,** by the evening of the third day, **and told him all things that befell them,** gave him a full report of all that had happened to them; v. 24. **and they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.** Rahab, the harlot, is an example of faith, Heb. 11, 31, for the Lord has His elect in the midst of an unbelieving nation. She forsook the sinful business in which she was engaged, and afterward became an ancestress of Jesus, Matt. 1, 5. It was an act of faith on her part to shield those representatives of God's people, Jas. 2, 25; Heb. 11, 31. True faith, love toward God, always shows itself in love toward the fellow-believers, in doing good to the members of God's people and in resisting the enemies of the Lord.

CHAPTER 3.

The Passage of Jordan.

THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR CROSSING. — V. 1. **And Joshua rose early in the morning,** on the fourth day after his great proclamation, chap. 1, 11. **And they removed from Shittim,** where their headquarters had been situated, **and came to Jordan,** a matter of about two hours' journey, during which they observed the usual order of march, **he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over,** they rested for some time, probably during the noon-hour. V. 2. **And it came to pass after three days,** those named in the order of Joshua, chap. 1, 11, **that the officers,** the officials in charge of the mustering, **went through the host,** during this pause in the day's march; v. 3. **and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, your God,** Ex. 25, 10—22, **and the priests, the Levites,** the priests of the sons of Levi who were charged with this work, **bearing it,** at the head of the army, as it seems to have been done once before, Num. 10, 33, **then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it,** in the orderly array commanded by God. V. 4. **Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure** (three thousand feet). **Come not near unto it,** they were to observe this respectful distance, lest their vanguard hide the Ark of the Covenant from the great number of the marchers, **that ye may know the way by which ye must**

go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore. It was not that the people were in danger of losing their way to the river, but that the Lord wanted them to note the miracle by which He opened the way to Canaan before their eyes. V. 5. **And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves;** after establishing camp for the night they were to engage in spiritual purification, typified also by the washing of their clothes and of their bodies, thus turning their hearts to God, in faith and trust in His promise, and in willing obedience to His commands, that they might rightly take to heart the miracle of grace which the Lord would perform among them the next day; **for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.** The passage of Jordan took place on the tenth of Nisan, chap. 4, 19. V. 6. **And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the Ark of the Covenant and pass over before the people.** This was the special work of the sons of Kohath, Num. 4, 15, and the order referred to the actual time of marching. **And they took up the Ark of the Covenant and went before the people,** this statement either anticipating the actual event, or having reference to the fact that the priests took up their station at the head of the army, ready for the march of the next day. V. 7. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel,** for the miraculous crossing of Jordan was only the first of a series of wonders by which the Lord placed His people in possession of the Land of Promise and confirmed Joshua in his position as leader of the people, **that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.** (Cp. chap. 1, 2—9. V. 8. **And thou shalt command the priests that bear the Ark of the Covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan,** the eastern bank or slope of the river, as it descended to the bed of the stream, **ye shall stand still in Jordan,** thus forming, as it were, a dam to hold back the waters rushing down from the north. The Ark of the Covenant here appears as the emblem of God's almighty presence. To this day God has bound His children to the use of certain means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Where these are administered, there the true, living God is present, there we find evidences of God's power and mercy, of His protection and blessing.

THE MIRACULOUS WALL OF WATER. — V. 9. **And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither and hear the words of the Lord, your God,** he addressed them in solemn assembly, as the congregation of Jehovah. V. 10. **And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail,** most certainly, according to His promise, Deut. 7, 1, **drive out from before you the Canaanites,** occupying chiefly the valley of Jordan and the Plain of Sharon, **and the Hittites,** some tribes of which were living in the northern part of Canaan, northwest of the Sea of Chinnereth, **and the Hivites,** located almost in the center of the country, **and the Perizzites,** just east of them, **and the Girgashites,** west of the Sea of Chinnereth, **and the Amorites,** just west and southwest of the Dead Sea, **and the Jebusites,** in the neighborhood of what was later Jerusalem. V. 11. **Behold, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.** Note that God, where the conquest of the land is in question, is called the Lord of the whole earth, the one to whom the whole earth belongs and who may dispense it at His pleasure, the one in whose almighty power the Israelites should have implicit faith. V. 12. **Now, therefore, take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.** The work which these men were to perform is described chap. 4, 3. V. 13. **And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan,** the mere touch of their feet being sufficient to bring about the miracle, **that the waters of Jordan,** of the flowing stream before them, **shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they,** the rushing waters above the place of crossing, **shall stand upon an heap,** being held back by the invisible dam of God's almighty power. V. 14. **And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents,** struck camp at their departure, **to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant before the people,** in the order prescribed by God, v. 15. **and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water** (for Jordan, barely a hundred feet wide in the dry season, **overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,** the melting snows of the northern mountains in the late spring, the season at which the passage took place, at the beginning of the barley harvest, causing the river to overflow its lower banks and to fill even the space which was ordinarily overgrown with reeds and bushes,) v. 16. **that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan,** where the lower valley was considerably narrowed by a low range of hills, at some distance from the place of crossing; **and those** (waters) **that came down toward the Sea of the Plain, even the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off,** diminished and finally disappeared entirely; **and the people passed over right against Jericho.** V. 17. **And the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in**

the midst of Jordan, for so completely had the waters disappeared that they had solid ground beneath their feet. **And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan,** and beyond the reach of even the high water which afterward again overflowed the bed of the stream. Thus wonderfully the Lord led His people into the Land of Promise. And He is the same living, almighty God to-day, opening paths before His children where they are unable to find any, and assisting them in the midst of all dangers, until they reach the promised home above.

CHAPTER 4.

The Memorial Stones.

THE STONES TAKEN FROM THE MIDST OF THE RIVER BED. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua,** saying, v. 2. **Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,** as had been provided for before the crossing began, chap. 3, 12, v. 3. **and command ye them,** saying, **Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm,** from the very center of the stream's bed, **twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place, where ye shall lodge this night.** It is plain that this entire paragraph, up to and including v. 7, belongs, in point of time, to the morning hours, and is here inserted together with the actual execution of the order and in explanation of it. V. 4. **Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel,** selected for this particular work, **out of every tribe a man;** v. 5. **and Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord, your God, into the midst of Jordan,** or, Go over to the place where the ark is now stationed, **and take you up, every man of you, a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel,** v. 6. **that this may be a sign among you,** serve for a memorial, a monument, in their midst, **that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?** v. 7. **then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off,** as related in the preceding chapter; **and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever,** to remind every succeeding generation of the great miracle which the Lord performed in keeping His promise and in leading His people safely into the Land of Promise. V. 8. **And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan,** the twelve men acting as the representatives of the entire host or congregation, **as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged,** where camp was pitched that evening, **and laid them down there,** in the form of a rough monument. V. 9. **And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan,** where they might become visible when the water was at low stage, **in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the Ark of the Covenant stood; and they are there unto this day,** to the time when this report was put down or this book written. This second monument was erected by Joshua without special divine direction, but nevertheless with a good purpose, for it served to bring home to the people the fact of God's protection and assistance in the conquest of Canaan.

THE STONES PITCHED IN GILGAL. — V. 10. **For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua; and the people hasted and passed over,** made as quick a passage as possible. Moses had, according to the command of God, commissioned Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land, at the same time giving him the assurance that the Lord would be with him. Therefore the execution of the divine command was at the same time an act of obedience to the charge of Moses. During all this time, while the entire host of Israel passed over and while the stones were taken from the bed of the river for the monument, the priests stood in the bed of the stream, their presence with the ark serving as a guarantee for the safe passage of all the people. V. 11. **And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over,** when every last one of them had reached the high ground beyond the flood-stage, **that the ark of the Lord passed over,** for it was the emblem of Jehovah, the almighty God, who held back the waves in their mad rush, **and the priests,** who were only the bearers of the sacred chest, **in the presence of the people,** all of them being witnesses of the miraculous happening. V. 12. **And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them,** that is, their best soldiers, as the representatives of their armies, chap. 1, 14; v. 13. **about forty thousand prepared for war,** fully

armed and equipped, **passed over before the Lord,** in whose presence their promise had been given, **unto battle,** for a war of conquest and extermination was before them, **to the plains of Jericho,** the plain or valley extending to that city. These forty thousand warriors represented the flower of the two and one half tribes east of Jordan, the remaining sixty to seventy thousand being left for the protection of the cities and their meadows. V. 14. **On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel,** they were filled with the proper reverence for him as the chosen leader of the host; **and they feared him as they feared Moses all the days of his life,** chap. 3, 7. V. 15. **And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying,** v. 16. **Command the priests that bear the Ark of the Testimony that they come up out of Jordan,** from the midst of the stream where they had been stationed during the passage of the people. V. 17. **Joshua, therefore, commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.** V. 18. **And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land,** literally, "tore themselves loose toward the dry land," said of leaving the bed of the stream and stepping upon the dry bank, **that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place,** flowed down stream in their natural course, **and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.** Thus it must have been plain to all the people that it had been the ark which had served as a dam to hold back the waters of the flooded river. V. 19. **And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month,** on the very day on which, forty years before, their fathers had selected a lamb or a kid for the first celebration of the Passover, Ex. 12, 3, **and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho,** of the territory of Jericho. V. 20. **And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan did Joshua pitch,** set up for a memorial, **in Gilgal.** V. 21. **And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?** v. 22. **then ye shall let your children know,** give them the information as the Lord had commanded in vv. 6 and 7, **saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.** V. 23. **For the Lord, your God, dried up the waters of Jordan from before you until ye were passed over, as the Lord, your God, did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over,** the statement being given in poetical form, with epic brevity and force; v. 24. **that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord,** acknowledge His almighty power in affording to His people this miraculous passage, **that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord, your God, forever,** Ex. 14, 31; Deut. 6, 2. The remembrance of God's wonderful deed at this time was intended to keep the right fear of the Lord in the hearts of the children of Israel, lest they, in forgetting His blessings, lose the faith and trust of their hearts. We Christians also should be ever mindful of the great and wonderful deeds of God which He performed for the salvation of our soul, in redeeming us from the terrors of the wilderness of His wrath and in leading us into the glorious light of the Gospel, as a surety of our eternal salvation.

CHAPTER 5.

Israel at Gilgal.

The Circumcision of the People. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of the Jordan westward,** the mighty heathen nations which occupied chiefly the mountainous section of Canaan, for among these the Amorites were the strongest, **and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea,** the heathen nations occupying the lowlands in the neighborhood of the Mediterranean Sea, **heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over,** for it is an eye-witness who is relating this story, **that their heart melted,** dissolved in apprehension and terror, **neither was there spirit in them any more,** they lost the last vestige of courage, **because of the children of Israel.** It was the terror of the Lord which had fallen upon them, causing all life and energy to be taken from them. V. 2. **At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives,** literally, knives of stone, made with a very sharp cutting edge, used extensively at that time, **and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.** As the people that came out of Egypt had been circumcised, so now there was to be a circumcision of the new generation, by which the solemn rite was solemnly reintroduced. V. 3. **And Joshua made him sharp knives and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins,** for the place was later known as Gibeah-haaraloth, because the foreskins were buried there. V. 4. **And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise,** why the Lord's order went forth to Joshua, and the latter had the order executed: **All the people that came out of Egypt that were males,**

even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, in the course of the desert journey, **after they came out of Egypt,** Num. 14, 29; Deut. 2, 16. V. 5. **Now, all the people that came out were circumcised,** the rite having been observed with all strictness in Egypt; **but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt,** the entire journey in the wilderness being included under this heading, **them they had not circumcised.** V. 6. **For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war,** mustered as being able to bear arms in battle, **which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord; unto whom the Lord sware that He would not show them the land which the Lord sware unto their fathers that He would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey,** Num. 14, 23. The extraordinary fertility of the country is here once more emphasized, as so often in the Old Testament, Ex. 3, 8. 17; 13, 5; 16, 14; Lev. 20, 24; Num. 13, 27; Deut. 1, 3. The meadow-lands of Canaan, with their rich carpet of grasses and flowers, were well suited for the raising of herds and flocks, while the bees found the abundance of fragrant flowers with their rich nectar eminently satisfactory for the production of honey. V. 7. **And their children, whom He raised up in their stead,** the Lord had them take the place of those who were fallen in the wilderness, **them Joshua circumcised,** their circumcision he ordered; **for they were uncircumcised, because they,** the several fathers of the families, **had not circumcised them by the way.** It was necessary that the present race of young men should receive the sign of the Lord's covenant before they dared undertake the conquest of Canaan. V. 8. **And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole,** had recovered from the effects of the operation. During this time there were at least some three hundred thousand men to take care of the necessary preparations for the celebration of the Passover and to guard against an eventual attack on the part of the heathen armies. V. 9. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you,** namely, that resulting from the report that God had led His people out of Egypt merely for the purpose of striking them down in the wilderness, Ex. 32, 12; Num. 14, 13—16; Deut. 9, 28. The act of circumcision at Gilgal was God's proclamation of the full restoration of the covenant, as first made with Abraham and at Sinai. **Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal** (rolling away) **unto this day.** The sacred covenant rite had now been resumed, and all reproach had been removed. Israel was consecrated for the possession of the Holy Land, for it is an obedient, consecrated people whom the Lord desires for His own.

THE PASSOVER CELEBRATED.—V. 10. **And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal,** having once more been accepted into the full covenant relation with Jehovah, **and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.** V. 11. **And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover,** on the fifteenth of Nisan, Lev. 23, 5. 6, **unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day,** roasted harvest ears or kernels of grain roasted at the fire, for it was not lawful to eat of the new crop until after the offering of the first sheaves on the sixteenth of Nisan, Lev. 23, 10. 11. V. 12. **And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land,** that is, on the sixteenth of Abib, or Nisan, **neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.** The people had now arrived in Canaan and no longer needed the bread of the wilderness. It should be noted here once more: "The feeding of the Israelites with manna remains a miracle of God which has, indeed, in nature, a faint analog, but can never be explained on natural principles." (Keil.) V. 13. **And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho,** while the children of Israel were in camp at Gilgal, Joshua, apparently, being engaged in deep meditation and prayer to Jehovah, **that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand,** taken from the scabbard and ready for slaughter. That was the Prince of the host of angels, the great Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Covenant, of one essence with the Lord Himself, who had accompanied Israel from Egypt and from Sinai. **And Joshua went unto Him and said unto Him, Art Thou for us or for our adversaries?** It was a question natural in the circumstances and appropriate for the general of the forces of Israel. V. 14. **And He said, Nay,** He belonged neither to the one nor to the other, **but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come,** Prince of the innumerable angelic armies. **And Joshua fell on his face to the earth,** in the attitude of abject submission and entreaty, **and did worship,** recognizing this Prince as a higher being, though not yet sure of His identity, **and said unto Him, What saith my Lord unto His servant?** V. 15. **And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot,** as Moses did in the presence of the burning bush, Ex. 3, 5; **for the place whereon thou standest is holy.** This undoubtedly re-

minded Joshua of the experience of Moses, and proved to him that this Prince of the heavenly host was He who had manifested Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. **And Joshua did so.** It is then that we may expect manifestations of Christ's divine grace and mercy, when we use the means of grace instituted by Him and are found in the way of our duty. Then it is also that He encamps round about us with the host of His angels and wages war for His Church against the world and the devil.

CHAPTER 6.

The Taking of Jericho.

The Siege of Jericho. — V. 1. **Now Jericho was straitly shut up,** not only strongly fortified, but also guarded with all strictness, **because of the children of Israel; none went out and none came in.** This remark is inserted by the historian by way of explanation, before he continues to describe the meeting between Joshua and the Prince of the heavenly host. V. 2. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho and the king thereof and the mighty men of valor.** This was the divine plan and intention, assuring the immediate help of God, the overthrow of the city and its staunch and mighty defenders by a miracle. V. 3. **And ye shall compass the city,** surround it completely, **all ye men of war, and go round about the city once,** march completely around it. **Thus shalt thou do six days,** on each of six successive days, which probably brought the time around once more to the eve of the Sabbath. V. 4. **And seven priests shall bear before the ark,** which was thus conspicuous in the line of march, **seven trumpets of rams' horns,** very large instruments, with a deep-toned, terrifying sound, especially when the notes were sustained; **and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.** The repetition on the several days of this procession about the city could only be intended to exercise Israel in unconditional faith and patient trust in the power and help of God, and to impress deeply upon the people the fact that it was the almighty power and faithfulness of Jehovah alone which gave into their hands this fortified city, one of the strongest in the land. The last day was surely the strongest test of their faith, for the besieged were probably not sparing in their jeering cries of contempt for a great host that ventured no attack, but continued on its endless procession around the city. V. 5. **And it shall come to pass that, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn,** in a long-sustained, single note, **and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout,** the cry of an army confident of victory; **and the wall of the city shall fall down flat,** topple over and lie prostrate, **and the people shall ascend up,** the ranks turning to face the city, **every man straight before him,** in perfect order of attack, without turning either to the right or to the left. This was the order of the Prince of the angelic host as it was imparted to Joshua at that wonderful meeting. V. 6. **And Joshua, the son of Nun,** having received this command from the Lord, **called the priests and said unto them, Take up the Ark of the Covenant,** to carry it in the intended procession, **and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord.** V. 7. **And he said unto the people,** the army that was actively engaged in this siege, **Pass on and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord,** the host of the two and one half tribes probably passing on in review, to be followed afterward by the host of the other tribes. V. 8. **And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord,** before the Ark of the Covenant, which was the visible sign of God's presence among His people, **and blew with the trumpets; and the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord followed them.** V. 9. **And the armed men,** that is, the first division of the army, **went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rearward,** the last division of the army forming the rear-guard, **came after the ark,** probably in the same manner as on the march through the desert, **the priests going on and blowing with the trumpets,** sounding without intermission. V. 10. **And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.** The grim and silent procession, moving forward without a sound but the tramping of marching feet and the blasts from the priests' horns, must have made the impression of unwavering determination. V. 11. **So the ark of the Lord,** the most conspicuous feature in the procession, **compassed the city,** going about it once; **and they came into the camp and lodged in the camp,** they spent the night there. V. 12. **And Joshua rose early in the morning,** on the second day, **and the priests took up the ark of the Lord.** V. 13. **And seven priests,** bearing **seven trumpets of rams' horns before the**

ark of the Lord, went on continually and blew with the trumpets, without intermission; **and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on and blowing with the trumpets.** V. 14. **And the second day they compassed the city once and returned into the camp; so they did six days,** observing the same procedure every day. It was a strange siege and one which tested the faith of the children of Israel strongly. For it was against all human reason and prudence for the army to lay aside all weapons and, instead, to march around the city with the sound of trumpets. But they followed the command of the Lord strictly and literally. It is a mark of true faith for a person to set reason aside, simply believe the Word, and trust the Lord in everything.

RAHAB SAVED AT THE OVERTHROW OF JERICHO. — V. 15. **And it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early about the dawning of the day,** when the first indications of the new day were visible in the east, **and compassed the city after the same manner seven times; only on that day they compassed the city seven times,** the greater part of the day, probably till near sundown, being occupied with this marching. V. 16. **And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets,** or, the priests had sounded the blast on the trumpets, for the description in the Hebrew is more vivid than in the translation, **Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.** V. 17. **And the city shall be accursed,** devoted to the Lord as under His curse and condemnation, **even it and all that are therein, to the Lord; only Rahab, the harlot, shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent,** chap. 2, 4. V. 18. **And ye, in any wise,** by all means, **keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed,** become polluted with the curse which God had pronounced upon the city and all it contained, **when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it,** since the transgression of a single person would be charged to the entire people. "A devoted thing, Num. 21, 2. 3; Deut. 7, 2; 20, 17, was that which had been doomed to the Lord, which no man might employ for his own use, but which was either put away and destroyed utterly to the honor of God, as the men and beasts in this passage, a propitiation, as it were, to the divine justice, that this might be glorified; or it was consecrated to the special service of God, as here all precious and useful metals." (Starke.) V. 19. **But all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto the Lord,** literally, "holiness are they to the Lord," and therefore not to be taken and used for profane purposes; **they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.** V. 20. **So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets,** at the long blast after the seventh trip around the city on this last day. **And it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout,** as commanded by the Lord, v. 5, **that the wall fell down flat,** toppled over and crumbled to pieces, **so that the people,** the attacking soldiers, **went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city,** by an obvious, almighty interposition of the Lord. V. 21. **And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword,** for it was the Lord's war of extermination. V. 22. **But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her,** chap. 2, 14. V. 23. **And the young men that were spies,** who had performed the work of spies in the instance referred to, **went in and brought out Rahab,** her house having evidently not fallen, although it was built against the city wall, **and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred,** chap. 2, 13, **and left them without the camp of Israel,** until they should have performed all the rites which were necessary to admit them into the congregation of the Lord. V. 24. **And they,** the soldiers of Israel, **burned the city with fire, and all that was therein; only the silver and the gold and the vessels of brass and of iron they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.** Thus was Jericho offered up as a first-fruits of the conquered land, because "this was the first city of Canaan which Jehovah had given into the hands of His people. This city, therefore, Israel should offer to the Lord, and even consecrate to Him as devoted, for a sign or token that they received the whole land from His hand, as a loan of what had fallen to Him, and not what they could obtain for themselves." V. 25. **And Joshua saved Rahab, the harlot, alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day,** being alive and considered a member of the people of the Lord at the time when this account was written, cp. Matt. 1, 5; **because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.** It was a reward of her act of faith. V. 26. **And Joshua adjured them,** the soldiers of Israel, **at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation**

thereof in his first-born, lose his oldest son at that time, **and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it,** he being taken by death at the completion of the building of the city. This threat was literally fulfilled, as the history of Israel shows, 1 Kings 16, 34. V. 27. **So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country,** his military ability as well as his success under the guidance of Jehovah. The overthrow of Jericho showed plainly that Jehovah was battling for His people, for the walls of the city fell by faith, Heb. 11, 30. This faith is the victory which overcomes the world. But in the fall of Jericho we also see a type of the final overthrow of all the powers of the world, death, and hell. At the end of the world the Lord will come with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, 1 Thess. 4, 16, and the whole world will fall down in ruins as He proceeds to carry out His judgment upon His enemies.

CHAPTER 7.

The Transgression and Punishment of Achan.

ISRAEL'S DEFEAT AT AI. — V. 1. **But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing,** the sin of one man being regarded as compromising all and making the entire host of Israel guilty in the sight of God; **for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi** (or Zimri, 1 Chron. 2, 6), **the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing,** appropriated some of the booty of the city, all of which had been declared devoted to the Lord, for his own use; **and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel,** it was fanned to a blaze, like a flame which shoots up with destructive force. Achan's sin had robbed the entire people of that purity and holiness which it was supposed to have in the sight of God, just as the impurity of a single member in the body infects all the members. V. 2. **And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Bethel,** northeast of Jericho and almost due north of Jerusalem, **and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country.** They were spies, entrusted with the task of obtaining the information necessary to send a successful expedition against the city. **And the men went up and viewed Ai.** V. 3. **And they returned to Joshua and said unto him, Let not all the people,** the entire army, **go up, but let about two or three thousand men,** literally, "two thousand men or some three thousand men," **go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor thither; for they are but few.** The city having but 12,000 inhabitants, chap. 8, 25, the number of able-bodied defenders probably did not exceed between two and three thousand, according to the estimate of the scouts. V. 4. **So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they fled before the men of Ai.** They not only were unable to accomplish their purpose, but they were even put to shameful flight. V. 5. **And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men; for they chased them from before the gate,** where the attack had been delivered, **even unto Shebarim,** stone quarries at some distance toward the south, **and smote them in the going down,** as they fled toward the valley of the Jordan; **wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water,** in utter discouragement and despondency. V. 6. **And Joshua rent his clothes,** as a sign of the deepest distress and mourning, **and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide,** in a silent and yet eloquent appeal to the Lord, **he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads,** another custom betokening the deepest mourning, 1 Sam. 4, 12; 2 Sam. 1, 2; 13, 19. V. 7. **And Joshua said,** in a mournful complaint, **Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites,** the heathen nation in this part of Canaan, **to destroy us?** For the defeat of the small army was a sign that the Lord had withdrawn His assistance. **Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side Jordan!** literally, "Had we but made up our minds to remain on the east side of Jordan!" It was the bold language of a faith battling with the Lord, unable to understand the ways of the Lord and including the most urgent appeal to the Lord to continue as the Ally of Israel. To this complaint is added an anxious question. V. 8. **O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies** in shameful flight? V. 9. **For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round,** completely surrounding them, **and cut off our name from the earth,** destroy them so completely that even their memory would be forgotten; **and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?** Joshua implies that the Lord had not had the due consideration of His honor in mind in permitting this misfortune to strike Israel, that it would now be a difficult matter to secure His honor against misunderstanding and blasphemy. Note: If any Christian congregation suffers a transgressor to remain in its midst, then all the members are guilty before the Lord.

ACHAN FOUND GUILTY AND PUNISHED. — V. 10. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?** This direct answer of Jehovah implied that Joshua had no reason to doubt the faithfulness of the Lord, but that the fault lay with the people. V. 11. **Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them.** It was Israel that had broken faith by setting aside the obligations of the covenant of Jehovah; **for they have even taken of the accursed thing, thus far have they forgotten themselves, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, acting a lie before Jehovah, and they have put it even among their own stuff.** Since the stolen goods were devoted to Jehovah by His express command, their being taken for private use was the height of blasphemous violence. The language of the Lord is very dramatic, laden with the most intense emotion. V. 12. **Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed, lying under the ban of Jehovah, destined for destruction unless the cause were removed; neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you,** the person actually guilty, who had involved the entire people in his guilt. V. 13. **Up, sanctify the people and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, as in chap. 3, 5; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing, something under Jehovah's ban, in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.** V. 14. **In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought,** into the presence of Jehovah, before the Tabernacle, **according to your tribes; and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.** So lots were to be cast, first upon the tribes, then upon the clans into which the guilty tribe was divided, then upon the houses of the fathers, the groups of families under one patriarchal ancestor, and finally upon the heads of the households included in the guilty house of the fathers. V. 15. **And it shall be that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire,** after having been stoned to death, Lev. 20, 14, **he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord and because he hath wrought folly in Israel,** moral foolishness and iniquity, resulting in trouble for the entire people. V. 16. **So Joshua rose up early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken,** declared to be the guilty one by the falling of the lots, under the direction of Jehovah. V. 17. **And he brought the family of Judah,** the various clans into which the tribe of Judah was divided; **and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family,** or clan, **of the Zarhites man by man,** the heads of the various houses of the fathers; **and Zabdi was taken;** v. 18. **and he brought his household man by man,** all the heads of the individual families; **and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken,** declared to be the guilty man by the testimony of the lots, whose falling or drawing was directed by Jehovah. V. 19. **And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel,** a very solemn formula of adjuration, **and make confession unto Him;** by admitting the truth Achan was to give praise to God, declaring His judgments to be righteous, also in the matter of his own punishment; **and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.** Achan should confess his sin in order to clear the rest of the people and to receive forgiveness for himself, although he had outwardly fallen under the irrevocable sentence of God. V. 20. **And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:** v. 21. **when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment,** a very precious, skilfully woven mantle, such as were made in Babylon and sold far and wide in the neighboring countries, **and two hundred shekels of silver** (about $128), **and a wedge of gold,** a piece of jewelry in the form of a tongue, **of fifty shekels' weight** (worth about $480); **then I coveted them and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.** That is the progress of sin: seeing, coveting, taking, hiding, dissembling. V. 22. **So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran into the tent; and, behold, it, the stolen mantle, was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.** V. 23. **And they took them out of the midst of the tent and brought them unto Joshua and unto all the children of Israel,** as they were assembled before the Lord, **and laid them out before the Lord,** probably in the court of the Tabernacle. V. 24. **And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold,** the detailed enumeration serving to emphasize his guilt, **and his sons, and his daughters,** since they shared in their father's guilt by concealing his theft, **and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had,** all his possessions coming under the curse; **and they brought them unto the**

Valley of Achor. V. 25. **And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us,** brought misfortune upon us? **The Lord shall trouble thee this day.** Achan, as the chief transgressor, is addressed. **And all Israel stoned him with stones,** this form of punishment signifying that Achan had by his robbery violated the honor of God, in the same way as blasphemers did, **and burned them,** his sons and daughters with him, **with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.** V. 26. **And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day,** commemorating his disgrace and serving as a warning for many years, until this account was embodied in the book. **So the Lord,** after the punishment of the guilty, **turned from the fierceness of His anger,** which includes the certainty that His assistance was assured for the future. **Wherefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Achor** (trouble) **unto this day.** The story of Achan contains an earnest lesson; for, although he was truly repentant, yet he had to suffer the penalty of his transgression. Thus a repentant sinner may be assured of the forgiveness of God and yet be obliged to suffer the punishment which was set upon his transgression. It is in this connection that a false sentimentalism is working more harm than good and making hypocrites out of many criminals who learn to play upon men's feelings.

CHAPTER 8.

Ai Taken. The Law Proclaimed.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TAKING OF AI. — V. 1. **And the Lord,** having restored His favor to Israel by the expiation of Achan's death, **said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed,** cast down and filled with apprehension. **Take all the people of war with thee,** the entire army, **and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land,** the territory of which Ai was capital; v. 2. **and thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king,** exterminate all human beings; **only the spoil thereof,** in money and goods, **and the cattle thereof shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves,** for only Jericho, as first-fruits, had been devoted to the Lord. **Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.** V. 3. **So Joshua arose and all the people of war,** the entire army, as ordered by God, **to go up against Ai,** he gave the command that all should be mustered. **And Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night,** since the distance was such as to be made easily in one night's march. V. 4. **And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city,** ready for an attack, **even behind the city. Go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready;** v. 5. **and I and all the people that are with me,** the main division of the army, **will approach unto the city,** along the road which led to it from the southeast; **and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them,** employ this ruse to draw them out of the city, v. 6. **(for they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city. For they will say, They flee before us as at the first; therefore we will flee before them,** thus strengthening the enemy in their false supposition and causing them to abandon caution. V. 7. **Then ye shall rise up from the ambush and seize upon the city,** capture it without difficulty; **for the Lord, your God, will deliver it into your hand.** V. 8. **And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire; according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.** V. 9. **Joshua therefore sent them forth; and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai,** there being some rocky ridges to the southwest, where concealment could easily be made. **But Joshua lodged that night among the people,** in camp with the larger division of his army, which marched less swiftly. V. 10. **And Joshua rose up early in the morning and numbered the people,** mustered them, **and went up, he and the elders of Israel,** for it behooved them to take the lead in the attack, **before the people of Ai,** so that the watchmen of the city could see them. V. 11. **And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai. Now, there was a valley between them and Ai.** Thus their camp was plainly visible from Ai, but could not easily be attacked. V. 12. **And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city,** for there was a second ridge toward the northwest. V. 13. **And when they had set the people,** assigned to every company and every individual the place which he was to occupy in the attack, **even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers-in-wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley,** moved forward, as though for an attack, under cover of darkness. Thus the main part of the army was on the north side of the city, the ambush of thirty thousand was on the southwest, directly behind the city, and

the smaller ambush of five thousand men was ready to attack the flank of the enemy. It was not merely Joshua's military genius which appears in this story, for the plan was made by the Lord, whose purpose was to reassure the army of Israel.

AI TAKEN AND DESTROYED. — V. 14. **And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hasted and rose up early,** believing they had only the army to the north of the city to deal with; **and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he** (the king) **and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain,** in the only place where a battle in open formation was possible, near the steppes of Beth-aven, east of Bethel; **but he wist not that there were liers-in-ambush against him behind the city.** V. 15. **And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them,** they feigned fear and weakness, **and fled by the way of the wilderness.** V. 16. **And all the people that were in Ai,** all the able-bodied men, **were called together to pursue after them; and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city,** leaving the latter altogether unprotected. V. 17. **And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel,** the inhabitants of the latter city having joined the forces of Ai, **that went not out after Israel; and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel,** thinking that the army of Israel was fleeing in utter and hopeless rout. V. 18. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand.** Joshua was probably occupying some higher point from which he was easily visible, or he may have been mounted and his figure easily distinguishable even at a distance. **And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city.** V. 19. **And the ambush,** to whom the outposts had immediately signaled to that effect, **arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand; and they entered into the city,** whose defenders were all engaged in the pursuit of the Israelites, **and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.** V. 20. **And when the men of Ai looked behind them,** their attention being drawn in that direction by the behavior of the Israelites, who turned to watch for the signal of the smoke's rising, **they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way,** they were paralyzed with sudden terror; **and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.** The whole situation of the men of Ai, who now saw before them the enemy, behind them the burning town, is admirably pictured in a few strokes. V. 21. **And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended,** for this was the sign for which they had been waiting, **then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.** V. 22. **And the other,** the Israelites who had lain in ambush, **issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side,** caught in a trap from which there was no escape. **And they,** the Israelites, **smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape,** the entire army of Ai, together with its allies, being destroyed. V. 23. **And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua,** who was to rule regarding his disposal. V. 24. **And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness, wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword,** put all its inhabitants to death. V. 25. **And so it was that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai,** the adult inhabitants. V. 26. **For Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out the spear until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.** This he did according to the universal rule of the ancients, which required the general to hold the signal of battle aloft until he desired the battle to be ended. V. 27. **Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the Lord which He commanded Joshua,** v. 2. V. 28. **And Joshua burned Ai, and made it an heap forever,** a heap of ashes and broken stones, **even a desolation unto this day;** its ruins were still visible at the time when the author wrote this account. V. 29. **And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide,** Num. 25, 4; **and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree,** Deut. 21, 23, **and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.** The entire story teaches that we should indeed use all our physical and mental powers in the work given us by the Lord, but that everything depends upon His almighty power and blessing. It is He who must give us the victory in every battle.

BLESSING AND CURSE PROCLAIMED. — V. 30. **Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal,** as the Lord had commanded, Deut. 27, 4. 5, v. 31. **as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the Law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron,** Ex. 20, 25. **And they offered**

thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace-offerings. V. 32. **And he** (Joshua) **wrote there upon the stones a copy of the Law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel,** Deut. 27, 2. 8. V. 33. **And all Israel and their elders and officers and their judges stood on this side the ark and on that side, before the priests, the Levites,** the ark thus occupying the center between the two divisions of the tribes, **which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger as he that was born among them, half of them over against Mount Gerizim and half of them over against Mount Ebal,** Deut. 11, 29; 27, 11—26, **as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.** V. 34. **And afterward he read all the words of the Law, the blessings and cursings,** fulfilling the Law being in itself a blessing and transgressing it being in itself a curse, Deut. 11, 26, **according to all that is written in the book of the Law.** V. 35. **There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones and the strangers that were conversant among** (living with) **them,** who had chosen to cast their lot with that of Israel. We believers of the New Covenant will ever be mindful of the revelation of the New Testament, of the Gospel, never leaving it out of our eyes. For upon a man's attitude toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ depends, in the last analysis, his eternal weal or woe.

CHAPTER 9.

The Craft of the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites Deceive Joshua and the Princes. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan,** on the west side, **in the hills,** in the entire mountain country of Canaan, **and in the valleys,** the lowland toward the south and west, **and in all the coasts of the great sea,** the Mediterranean Sea, **over against Lebanon,** in the entire strip of open coast, from the neighborhood of Joppa well into Phenicia, **the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite,** chap. 3, 10, **heard thereof,** namely, of all the deeds which Israel had undertaken till now, v. 2. **that they gathered themselves together,** they formed a league, **to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord,** there being only one opinion expressed among them, namely, that they must maintain an alliance in order to overcome the invaders. V. 3. **And when the inhabitants of Gibeon,** the capital of a small independent state in the mountains northwest of Jerusalem, the principality containing a number of smaller cities as well, v. 17. **heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and Ai,** v. 4. **they did work wilily,** they made use of a stratagem, **and went and made as if they had been ambassadors,** or, they provided themselves with victuals, **and took old sacks upon their asses and wine-bottles,** specially prepared skins, as they were used for transporting liquids, **old, and rent, and bound up,** v. 5. **and old shoes and clouted upon their feet,** sandals worn and patched, **and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy,** the mold having eaten spots into the bread. V. 6. **And they went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal,** either that near Jericho, or, more probably, that in Mount Ephraim, about midway between Jerusalem and Shechem, **and said unto him and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country; now, therefore, make ye a league with us.** V. 7. **And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites,** for that is what the Gibeonites were, as the Israelites later found out, **Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?** This question was prompted by the suspicious aspect of the entire matter, which made it seem probable that the ambassadors were members of some Canaanitish nation. V. 8. **And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants,** which was really a meaningless form of courtesy and not at all satisfactory. **And Joshua,** not satisfied with this evasive attitude, **said unto them, Who are ye, and from whence come ye?** It was a direct and definite inquiry. V. 9. **And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord, thy God; for,** as they add in explanation, **we have heard the fame of Him, and all that He did in Egypt,** v. 10. **and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon, king of Heshbon, and to Og, king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.** They wisely make no mention of the miraculous passage of Jordan and of the taking of Jericho, in order not to contradict their statement of having been on the way a long time. V. 11. **Wherefore our elders,** the officials of their republic, **and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them,** the Israelites, **and say unto them, We are your servants; therefore, now, make ye a league with us.** V. 12. **This our bread we took hot,** straight from the oven, **for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you, but now, behold, it is dry, and**

it is moldy; v. 13. **and these bottles,** skins, **of wine, which we filled, were new, and, behold, they be rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.** It was a bold stroke by which the messengers pointed to their provisions and to their clothing in corroboration of their story. V. 14. **And the men,** the princes of Israel, **took of their victuals,** either to convince themselves of the truth of the statements presented to them, or in an act implying readiness to make a league with the Gibeonites, **and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord,** thus transgressing an explicit command of the Lord, Num. 27, 21; for that was one of the functions of the high priest, to ask advice of the Lord in all difficult questions by means of Urim and Thummim. V. 15. **And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them,** to their advantage, **to let them live; and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.** In the entire transaction Joshua and the heads of Israel acted very foolishly, and the result was a transgression of God's command, who had made the strict rule that no covenants were to be made with the nations of Canaan, Ex. 23, 32; 34, 12. The neglect to consult the Word of God in important questions has plunged many a Christian into severe sins.

THE DECEPTION DISCOVERED AND PUNISHED. V. 16. **And it came to pass at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them, that they,** the Israelites, **heard that they,** the Gibeonites, **were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them,** almost in the center of Canaan. V. 17. **And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now, their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim,** the location of all of which is pretty definitely known, west and northwest of Jerusalem. V. 18. **And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel,** namely, to spare their lives, and they felt themselves bound in conscience, by their reverence of the oath in itself, Lev. 19, 12, although, strictly speaking, the condition of the ambassadors' having come from a distant country was attached to the oath and rendered it invalid. **And all the congregation murmured against the princes.** V. 19. **But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel; now, therefore, we may not touch them.** V. 20. **This we will do to them: we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.** The punishment of God did strike Israel later, at the time of David, because Saul, not paying any attention to this oath and the subsequent provision, had tried to exterminate the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. 21. V. 21. **And the princes said unto them, Let them live, but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.** So their lives were spared, but they were given the most menial position in Israel; they were made slaves of the Sanctuary, being obliged to perform the lowest tasks there, as servants of the entire congregation. In this way the danger of their attempting to lead Israel into idolatry was also removed. Thus the matter was decided upon and adjusted. V. 22. **And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you, when ye dwell among us?** It was a just rebuke of the lying craftiness of the Gibeonites. V. 23. **Now, therefore, ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen,** they were never to cease being slaves, that was to be their social status in Israel forever, **and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God,** reckoned among the lowest class of the people, Deut. 29, 10. 11. Together with captives taken in war and devoted for like purposes to the Sanctuary, they bore, at a later period, the name *Nethinim,* 1 Chron. 9, 2; Neh. 7, 43. 46. V. 24. **And they answered Joshua,** in attempting to justify their action, **and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants how that the Lord, thy God, commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.** V. 25. **And now, behold, we are in thine hand; as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.** It was an unconditional submission, by which they left their fate entirely in the hands of Joshua. V. 26. **And so he did unto them,** as had been decided upon, **and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not,** which they, in their warlike zeal, would have been only too willing to do. V. 27. **And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord even unto this day,** at the Tabernacle, **in the place which He should choose,** this note proving that the book was written before the building of Solomon's Temple. Yet the Gibeonites, condemned to everlasting servitude as they were, were received into the fellowship of the blessings of Jehovah. There are always some souls, even among the outcasts of the world, who hear of the mercy of the Lord and are moved to accept His invitation in the Gospel. Mark: An oath in uncertain things may be the cause of much trouble and unpleasantness, if it does not lead to severe transgressions of the will of God.

CHAPTER 10.

The Destruction of the Five Kings.

The Defeat of the Five Kings on a Day of Miraculous Length. — V. 1. **Now, it came to pass, when Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem, had heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it, (as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king,** a judgment of extermination having been carried out upon them,) **and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them,** in alliance with them, the entire Central Canaan thus being in the hands of the invaders, v. 2. **that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities,** the capitals occupied by the sheiks, or kings, of the various tribes and nations, **and because it was greater than Ai and all the men thereof were mighty.** V. 3. **Wherefore Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem, sent unto Hoham, king of Hebron,** the ancient city in Southern Canaan, **and unto Piram, king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia, king of Lachish, and unto Debir, king of Eglon,** these cities being in the lowlands toward the southwest, bordering on Philistia, **saying,** v. 4. **Come up unto me and help me that we may smite Gibeon; for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.** The campaign was not directed against Israel, but against Gibeon, for the action of the Gibeonites was construed as a betrayal of the Canaanites' cause, as a going over to the enemy. V. 5. **Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together,** formed an alliance, **and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.** Thus these kings hardened their hearts against the obvious proofs of God's power and plunged headlong into their destruction. V. 6. **And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua, to the camp, to Gilgal,** for they were now in alliance with Israel, **saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants,** do not withdraw it in this emergency; **come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us,** the appeal being in the form of a climax; **for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.** Since the Amorites of the mountains, the Jebusites, were the strongest among the allies, the entire army of the enemy is described accordingly. V. 7. **So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, in a forced night march, he and all the people of war with him and all the mighty men of valor,** a picked portion of the army. V. 8. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.** Cp. chap. 2, 24; 6, 2; 8, 1. 18. V. 9. **Joshua, therefore, came unto them suddenly,** in a surprise attack, the rapid march being a proof of his great military genius, **and went up from Gilgal all night.** V. 10. **And the Lord discomfited them,** the Amorites, **before Israel,** made them confused and helpless at this sudden attack, **and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon,** the pass in the mountains which led to the plains beyond, **and smote them to Azekah and unto Makkedah,** far down in the lowlands of Philistia, the battle thus rapidly changing to flight and pursuit over a distance of some thirty miles. V. 11. **And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon,** where the foothills converge into the plains of Philistia, **that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah,** in a terrible hailstorm, **and they died; they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.** The Israelites were to see and understand that it was not their own strength, but the divine assistance of Jehovah, which gave them the victory. V. 12. **Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,** in a mighty prayer of faith, **Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,** wait, delay some time; **and thou, Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon.** This must, therefore, have happened while the moon was in its first quarter. The command was a heroic prayer to the Lord and Creator of the world to interfere in the order of nature and not to permit the setting of the main lights controlling the division of time until Israel would have completed her vengeance upon her enemies. V. 13. **And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,** they were held back, they did not continue their course, **until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies,** completely destroyed them. **Is not this written in the Book of Jasher** (of the righteous), a book of poems praising the great deeds of Jehovah? **So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down,** made no progress toward the west, **about a whole day.** V. 14. **And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.** Thus the living, almighty God wrought a great miracle, for the religious destiny of all the world was here at stake. All the efforts of Bible-scholars and critics to explain away this fact avail them nothing; the text is too clear and too powerful.

The Five Kings Put to Death. — V. 15. **And Joshua returned, and all Israel with**

him, unto the camp, to Gilgal, this central location being convenient for all campaigns. V. 16. But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah, for the lime- and chalk-rocks of this neighborhood contain many suitable caves. V. 17. And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah. V. 18. And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them, to guard the entrance, lest they escape; v. 19. and stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them, the rear-guard, so far as there was still a semblance of order in their ranks; suffer them not to enter into their cities, to escape into fortified places; for the Lord, your God, hath delivered them into your hand. V. 20. And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them, a small remnant, entered into fenced cities, where they were safe for the time being. V. 21. And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua, at Makkedah, where he had pitched for the purpose of continuing the campaign, in peace; none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel, Ex. 11, 7. The enemies were so thoroughly subdued and frightened that no one ventured to do any harm to any of the children of Israel, although they must have been scattered far and wide in their pursuit of the Amorite army. V. 22. Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. V. 23. And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. V. 24. And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near and put your feet upon the necks of these kings, in token of their complete subjection and of the conquest of all enemies of the Lord. And they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them. V. 25. And Joshua said unto them, to the officers of his army, Fear not, nor be dismayed, filled with terror, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. V. 26. And afterward, after this symbolical act, Joshua smote them, the five kings, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. Cp. chap. 8, 29. V. 27. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, Deut. 21, 23, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day, or, which the Israelites had kept in the mouth of the cave to the day when the kings were executed. It was an act of God's punishment, and shows the manner in which He is able to deal with all His enemies and those who interfere with His plans in His Church.

THE CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN CANAAN. — V. 28. And that day, while the five kings were suspended from trees, Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them and all the souls that were therein, in the same manner of extermination employed in the case of Jericho and Ai; he let none remain; and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho, chap. 6, 21. V. 29. Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, a few miles to the south, and fought against Libnah; v. 30. and the Lord delivered it also and the king thereof into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it, but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho. V. 31. And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, following up every advantage immediately, and encamped against it, and fought against it. V. 32. And the Lord delivered Lachish, which was almost in the center of the country of the Philistines, southwest of Libnah, into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah. V. 33. Then Horam, king of Gezer, in Northern Philistia, came up, from the lowlands, to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people until he had left him none remaining. V. 34. And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, a few miles to the east, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it; v. 35. and they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish. V. 36. And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron, in the mountains, some thirty miles east; and they fought against it; v. 37. and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, the successor to him who had been executed at Makkedah, and all the cities thereof, the tributary suburbs, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly

and all the souls that were therein. V. 38. **And Joshua returned,** turned back, toward the southwest, **and all Israel with him, to Debir,** some ten miles from Hebron, **and fought against it.** V. 39. **And he took it and the king thereof and all the cities thereof,** those under its jurisdiction; **and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah and to her king.** This territory, the extreme southern part of Canaan, was afterward again occupied by the Anakim and the Amorites, which made a second conquest of Hebron and the vicinity necessary. V. 40. **So Joshua smote all the country of the hills,** the mountainous section of Central and Southern Canaan, **and of the south,** the plain forming the southern portion of Judea, **and of the vale,** the lowlands of the southwest, **and of the springs,** the foothills section, or piedmont region, from Joppa to Gaza, **and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded,** Deut. 20, 16. 17. V. 41. **And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza,** all the land between the Jordan valley and the Mediterranean in one direction, **and all the country of Goshen,** a section of the southern mountains, **even unto Gibeon,** from the heights of Gibeon to the wilderness. V. 42. **And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time,** in one campaign, **because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.** V. 43. **And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp, to Gilgal,** where he still had his headquarters, and where his soldiers could rest after their strenuous exploits. God is great and wonderful and past understanding in His judgments, but also at all times holy and righteous.

CHAPTER 11.

The Conquest of Northern Canaan.

The Second Alliance of Heathen Kings and Their Defeat. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when Jabin, king of Hazor,** a city in the extreme northern part of Canaan, southeast of Tyre, **had heard those things,** the conquest of the entire southern part of Canaan, **that he sent to Jobab, king of Madon,** a city near the brook Kishon, **and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,** v. 2. **and to the kings that were on the north of the mountains,** what was later the mountainous region of Naphtali, **and of the plains south of Chinneroth,** the wide part of the valley of Jordan, south of the Sea of Galilee, **and in the valley,** the strip bordering the Mediterranean Sea between Akko and Sidon, **and in the borders of Dor on the west,** a Phenician city south of Tyre, overlooking the sea, later occupied by Manassites, v. 3. **and to the Canaanite on the east and on the west,** for their tribes occupied the lowlands, **and to the Amorite,** mainly in the mountain districts, **and the Hittite,** northwest of the Sea of Galilee, **and the Perizzite,** in the foothill country farther south, **and the Jebusite in the mountains,** the highlands of Judah, **and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh,** in the far north, in the spurs of the Lebanon range. So the alliance included all the tribes from Mount Hermon to Mount Carmel, some of the mightiest being those of the Plain of Esdraelon. V. 4. **And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people,** a mighty army, **even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.** V. 5. **And when all these kings were met together,** had joined their forces by definite appointment, **they came and pitched together at the Waters of Merom,** a small lake about three miles in diameter, north of the Sea of Galilee, hardly more than a swamp in the dry season, **to fight against Israel.** It was a strategically strong position, for the army shielded the important cities to the north and west, while it was ready to meet the army of Joshua with every prospect of victory. V. 6. **And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them; for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel; thou shalt hough,** hamstring, **their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.** Evidently Joshua was already on his way to Northern Canaan when his scouts brought him the news of the enemy's strength, and the words of the Lord were intended to reassure him. V. 7. **So Joshua came,** after one of his characteristic rapid marches, **and all the people of war with him, against them,** the heathen armies, **by the Waters of Merom suddenly,** in a surprise attack; **and they fell upon them.** V. 8. **And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon,** the ancient capital of Phenicia, **and unto Misrephoth-maim,** a place of springs at the foot of a steep precipice, over which a part of the enemy's army was forced, and, having dispersed the main body of their opponents, **unto the Valley of Mizpeh eastward,** into the foothills of the Lebanon toward the northeast; **and they smote them until they left them none remaining.** V. 9. **And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade**

him: he houghed their horses, by severing the tendons of their hind legs, and burned their chariots with fire, whose bodies therefore were certainly of wood. V. 10. And Joshua at that time turned back and took Hazor, whose king was the leader in the alliance, and smote the king thereof with the sword; for Hazor beforetime was the head of all these kingdoms, the chief city of the northern confederacy. V. 11. And they, the Israelites, smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them, as being under the ban of Jehovah; there was not any left to breathe. And he burned Hazor with fire, purposely dealing more harshly with this city than with the rest. V. 12. And all the cities of those kings, who had been in the confederacy, and all the kings of them did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword; and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded, Num. 33, 52; Deut. 7, 2. V. 13. But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, every one on its height or hill, as the inland cities were usually built, Israel burned none of them, although it overthrew or destroyed them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn. These cities remained in their old locations, many of them rising out of their ruins to new splendor. V. 14. And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man, all the human inhabitants, both young and old, they smote with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe, Deut. 20, 16. V. 15. As the Lord commanded Moses, His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. If the children of God trust in Him with full obedience, the Lord gives them the victory over all their enemies.

THE CONQUEST OF WESTERN PALESTINE. — V. 16. So Joshua took all that land, the hills, the mountainous sections of Canaan proper, and all the south country, the great steppes of Judah, and all the land of Goshen, the foothills country toward the west, and the valley, the plains in the central and northwestern section, and the plain, probably that of Sharon, and the mountain of Israel, Ephraim, in the center of the land, and the valley of the same, its lowland on the west; v. 17. even from the Mount Halak that goeth up to Seir, the smooth or bald mountain in the Azazimeh range in the south, whose chalk cliffs probably gave it the name, even unto Baal-gad, in the Valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon, in the extreme north; and all their kings he took, and smote them and slew them. Thus the entire campaign, lasting some seven years, is summarized. V. 18. Joshua made war a long time with all these kings. V. 19. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon, chap. 9, 3. 7; all other they, the children of Israel, took in battle. V. 20. For it was of the Lord, it was His dispensation, to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, no compassionate sympathy from Him, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses, Deut. 20, 16. 17. Theirs was an obduration, a hardening of heart, like that of Pharaoh, Ex. 4, 21. V. 21. And at that time, in the course of the conquest of the entire country, came Joshua and cut off the Anakim, the race of giants, Num. 13, 28 ff., from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, chap. 10, 36. 38, from Anab, another city south of Hebron, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. This account supplements that of the preceding chapter and shows that the giant race was by no means unconquerable, as the spies had reported on their return to the camp of Israel in Kadesh-barnea. V. 22. There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, the city of Goliath, and in Ashdod, the city of the idol Dagon, these three being cities of Philistia, there remained. V. 23. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes, as related in the subsequent account. And the land rested from war, not because all the Canaanites had been exterminated or even all their cities taken, but because their power was broken, their dominion a thing of the past, and Israel master of the entire land. The remnants of the heathen nations might easily have been conquered and annihilated, if Israel had but remained faithful to Jehovah, for with His help, in His power, everything is possible.

CHAPTER 12.

A List of Canaanitish Kings and Their Conquered Kingdoms.

On the East Side of Jordan. — V. 1. **Now, these are the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon,** the northern boundary of Moab, **unto Mount Hermon,** in the Anti-Lebanon range, **and all the plain on the east,** the valley of Jordan with its eastern tributaries: v. 2. **Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river,** that is, from the middle of the valley, from the city of Ar, or Areopolis, **and from half Gilead,** the hilly section on the south side of Jabbok, **even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon,** that is, in its upper reaches; v. 3. **and from the plain,** the Arabian Desert, **to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea, on the east, the way to Beth-jeshimoth,** which was located near the mouth of the Jordan; **and from the south, under Ashdoth-pisgah,** under the foothills of the range flanking the Dead Sea on the east, all this country, as thus bounded, being included in the kingdom of Sihon, who was defeated by the army of Israel, Num. 21; Deut. 2; v. 4. **and the coast of Og, king of Bashan, which was of the remnant of the giants,** a descendant of the ancient giant races, **that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,** Deut. 1, 4; 3, 11; Num. 21, 33, v. 5. **and reigned in Mount Hermon and in Salcah,** Deut. 3, 10, on the southern border of the Hauran, **and in all Bashan,** the Hauran proper, the entire upper valley of the Hieromax River, **unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites,** the former located on the southeastern, the latter on the southwestern slopes of Mount Hermon, **and half Gilead,** the part north of the Jabbok, **the border of Sihon, king of Heshbon.** V. 6. **Them did Moses, the servant of the Lord, and the children of Israel smite; and Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh,** Num. 32, 33. These kings of the Amorites had been powerful monarchs, but they had been helpless before the army of the Lord.

The Conquered Kings West of Jordan. — V. 7. **And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad, in the Valley of Lebanon,** in the north, **even unto the Mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir,** chap. 11, 17; **which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions;** v. 8. **in the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites,** cp. chap. 10, 40—42; 11, 16: v. 9. **the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one;** v. 10. **the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;** v. 11. **the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one;** v. 12. **the king of Eglon, one,** the last five being those defeated at Gibeon, and executed at Makkedah, chap. 10; **the king of Gezer, one,** chap. 10, 33; v. 13. **the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder,** in the lowlands of Judah, **one;** v. 14. **the king of Hormah,** on the extreme southern boundary, **one; the king of Arad,** south of Hebron, **one;** v. 15. **the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;** v. 16. **the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one,** all those named till now being in the central and southern part of Canaan; v. 17. **the king of Tappuah,** in the Plain of Jezreel, near the river Kishon, **one; the king of Hepher,** in the same region, **one;** v. 18. **the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one;** v. 19. **the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one,** he being the leader in the northern confederacy, chap. 11, 10; v. 20. **the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one;** v. 21. **the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one,** both these cities being situated in the Valley of Jezreel; v. 22. **the king of Kedesh,** on the mountains of Naphtali, **one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one;** v. 23. **the king of Dor in the coast of Dor,** chap. 11, 2, **one; the king of the nations of Gilgal,** not far from Naphoth-dor, **one;** v. 24. **the king of Tirzah,** north of Shechem, in Samaria, **one: all the kings thirty and one.** The enumeration of these conquered kings served as a reminder to the children of Israel never to forget the powerful and miraculous help of Jehovah, by which He gave them possession of the country promised to their fathers and them. It is only by always keeping the great deeds of God for our salvation before our eyes that we appreciate them with any degree of proper gratitude.

CHAPTER 13.

Concerning the Distribution of Canaan.

THE COMMAND TO DISTRIBUTE THE LAND. — V. 1. **Now, Joshua was old and stricken in years,** literally, "well advanced in days," said of one whose age is showing plainly; **and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.** These sections are now, by way of parenthesis, enumerated. V. 2. **This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines,** literally, all the circles of the Philistines, the five city-states of the country being referred to, the capitals with their suburbs and vicinity being joined in a confederacy, **and all Geshuri,** a small principality south of the Philistines, on the border of Egypt, 1 Sam. 27, 8, v. 3. **from Sihor, which is before Egypt,** the so-called brook of Egypt, 1 Chron. 13, 5, for this actually flows northeastwardly from or before Egypt, **even unto the borders of Ekron northward,** for thus far the territory of the Philistines extended, **which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines: the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites,** that is, the inhabitants of Gaza, mentioned frequently in the Old and also in the New Testament, of Ashdod, of Ashkelon, of Gath, and of Ekron, all of which have been identified with the exception of Gath, which seems to have been totally destroyed; **also the Avites,** or Avim, a small tribe living southwest of Gaza; **from the south,** that is, in the south; v. 4. **all the land of the Canaanites,** of the Phenicians living along the coast to the northwest, **and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians,** a well-known cave on Lebanon, east of Sidon, **unto Aphek,** a small city northeast of what is now Beirut, **to the borders of the Amorites,** the country of Bashan; for the entire Leontes Valley and the region in the neighborhood of Damascus was really included in the territory as the Lord intended it for Israel; v. 5. **and the land of the Giblites,** of the race of Gebal, on the Mediterranean Sea, north of what is now Beirut, **and all Lebanon,** the entire region included within this range with its foothills, **toward the sun-rising, from Baal-gad, under Mount Hermon,** chap. 12, 7, **unto the entering into Hamath,** a small territory in the Orontes Valley, Num. 34, 8. V. 6. **All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim,** chap. 11, 8, the present promontory of Ras-en-Nakura, **and all the Sidonians,** an ancient name for all the Phenicians, **them will I drive out from before the children of Israel; only,** although it is not yet conquered, **divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.** The distribution of the country was to go on with a view toward the eventual possession of the entire country, as here described by the Lord. Israel afterward neglected to drive out the nations occupying all this territory, thereby not only reducing its own heritage, but also keeping these tribes as a continual temptation to idolatry. V. 7. **Now, therefore, divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh,** those that had not yet been assigned a part of Canaan, v. 8. **with whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance,** they had already entered upon the possession of the territory assigned to them, **which Moses gave them beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave them,** there was no change made either in the extent or in the boundaries of their possessions: v. 9. **from Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river,** of the valley of the Arnon, chap. 12, 2, **and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon,** the plateau east of Mount Pisgah, so named after its principal city; v. 10. **and all the cities of Sihon, king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon;** v. 11. **and Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites,** chap. 12, 5, **and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah;** v. 12. **all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for these did Moses smite, and cast them out,** Num. 21, 24—35. V. 13. **Nevertheless, the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites nor the Maachathites,** chap. 15, 63; 16, 10; 17, 12. 13; **but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.** V. 14. **Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance,** no separate territory; **the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them,** Num. 18, 20—24. They possessed no earthly inheritance; with all the greater zeal they should therefore devote themselves to Jehovah and His worship. In a similar manner Christians know that they have here no continuing city, but they seek one to come, Heb. 13, 14.

THE TERRITORY OF THE TWO AND ONE HALF TRIBES. — V. 15. **And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families,** Num. 32. V. 16. **And their coast,** their boundary, **was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river,** Ar in the valley of the Arnon, **and all the plain by Medeba,** east of the Dead Sea; v. 17. **Heshbon,** the former capital of Sihon, **and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon,** about four miles north of Ar-

non, **and Bamoth-baal,** Num. 24, 20, **and Beth-baal-meon,** a short distance southeast of Heshbon, Num. 32, 38, v. 18. **and Jahaza,** where Sihon was defeated, almost at the eastern edge of the plateau, **and Kedemoth,** later a city of the Levites, 1 Chron. 6, 79, **and Mephaath,** another Levite city, v. 19. **and Kirjathaim,** where Chedorlaomer defeated the Enim, Gen. 14, 5, **and Sibmah,** a suburb of Heshbon, **and Zareth-shahar in the mount of the valley,** nearer to the Dead Sea than Heshbon, v. 20. **and Beth-peor,** opposite Jericho, on the slopes of Mount Peor, **and Ashdoth-pisgah,** on the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea, **and Beth-jeshimoth,** near the mouth of the Jordan, v. 21. **and all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites,** so far as it was contained in this plateau, **which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian,** Num. 21, 24, **Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon,** vassals or tributaries, **dwelling in the country,** Num. 31, 8. V. 22. **Balaam, also, the son of Beor, the soothsayer,** the diviner by the casting of lots, a name which brands him a false prophet, **did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them,** Num. 22, 5; 31, 8. V. 23. **And the border,** the boundary, **of the children of Reuben was Jordan and the border thereof,** to the territory of the Jordan in the west, for its main part was east of the Dead Sea. **This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof,** the latter being open towns, without walls or fortifications. V. 24. **And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad, even unto the children of Gad, according to their families.** V. 25. **And their coast,** their boundary, as it included their territory, **was Jazer,** a city taken from the Amorites, Num. 21, 32, **and all the cities of Gilead,** that is, its southern part, below the Jabbok, **and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer, that is before Rabbah,** the part of Ammonitis between the Arnon and the Jabbok, which the Amorites under Sihon had taken from the Ammonites (both the Aroer and the Rabbah here mentioned are not to be confounded with those of Moabitis); v. 26. **and from Heshbon,** which was practically on the northern boundary of Reuben, **unto Ramath-mizpeh,** that is, Ramoth in Gilead, **and Betonim,** these being the most important cities in the north; **and from Mahanaim,** Gen. 32, 2, a Levite city north of Jabbok, **unto the border of Debir,** or Lidhbir, probably on the heights which border the Jordan; v. 27. **and in the valley, Betharam,** later Libias, Num. 32, 36, **and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth,** where Jacob lived for some time, Gen. 33, 17, **and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon, king of Heshbon, Jordan and his border,** the river valley proper, **even unto the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth,** the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, **on the other side Jordan eastward.** While the Jabbok was, generally speaking, the northern boundary of the territory of Gad, the latter extended northward at least to include the plateau of Mahanaim and the Jordan valley to the Sea of Galilee. V. 28. **This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages.** V. 29. **And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh; and this was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families.** V. 30. **And their coast was from Mahanaim,** from the boundaries of this city, **all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, threescore cities,** Num. 32, 41; v. 31. **and half Gilead,** the northern half, **and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were pertaining unto the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, even to the one half of the children of Machir by their families.** V. 32. **These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the Plains of Moab,** while the children of Israel were encamped there, **on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward.** V. 33. **But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them,** Num. 18, 20; Deut. 10, 9. Note: The end of Balaam is an example of warning. Like him all those who come to the knowledge of the truth, but reject it, preferring the froth of this world to the substance of eternity, will be subject to a severe condemnation.

CHAPTER 14.

The Possession of Caleb.

THE BEGINNING OF THE DISTRIBUTION.—V. 1. **And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited,** received for their possession, **in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar, the priest, and Joshua, the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them,** to remain in their possession, and to be transferred from one generation to the next. V. 2. **By lot was their inheritance, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and for the half tribe,** Num. 26, 52—56. **The** location of the territory of the various tribes was determined by lot, but the size of each

tribal state was fixed according to the numerical strength of the individual tribe. V. 3. **For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan,** as described in detail in the preceding chapter; **but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.** V. 4. **For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim; therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance,** forty-eight cities with their meadows or pasture-lands, Num. 35. V. 5. **As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land,** they made preparations for its distribution by lot, under the direction of the leaders appointed by God, although some time elapsed before the division of the land was actually completed.

CALEB GRANTED HEBRON FOR AN INHERITANCE. — V. 6. **Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal,** this being the first interruption in the work of distributing the land; **and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea,** namely, in promising them a possession in the land of Canaan, Num. 14, 24, for the stand which they took over against the other spies after their return from their scouting expedition. The men presenting this petition were not representatives of the tribe of Judah in general, but only of the house of fathers out of that tribe which bore the name of Kenaz, a descendant of Hezron. V. 7. **Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea,** where Israel was then encamped, **to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart,** with a bold and confident spirit, which was not easily discouraged like that of the rest of the spies. V. 8. **Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt,** the other spies discouraged the children of Israel by their unfavorable attitude; **but I wholly followed the Lord, my God,** rendered Him unconditional, cheerful obedience. V. 9. **And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord, my God.** This account supplements that given Num. 14, for it can be understood only of a direct promise made to Caleb, with special reference to Hebron and its vicinity, where the giants lived who had so terrified the other spies. V. 10. **And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old,** having thus been fully thirty-eight at the time of the departure from Egypt. In order to establish his claim, Caleb now mentions another factor. V. 11. **As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, both to go out and to come in.** He was as yet unaffected by the weakness of old age and was able to hold his own in battle even with the young men of the army. V. 12. **Now, therefore, give me this mountain whereof the Lord spake in that day,** the mountainous region of Hebron; **for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there,** the giants who had filled the hearts of the scouts with fear, **and that the cities were great and fenced,** strongly fortified; **if so be the Lord will be with me,** that is his sincere wish and prayer, **then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.** Since Joshua had not garrisoned these cities after his conquest of them, the Anakim had returned and built them again. V. 13. **And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance,** this city being named as the capital to which the entire neighborhood down to Debir belonged. V. 14. **Hebron, therefore, became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel,** having trusted faithfully in the almighty power of Jehovah. V. 15. **And the name of Hebron before,** when it was first founded, **was Kirjath-arba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakim,** the most renowned of their tribe. **And the land had rest from war,** affairs were now in such a condition that the division and the occupation of the country by Israel could continue. Those who are firm in tribulation and loyal to the Lord grow in His power, ever renewing and increasing their strength and receiving His blessings in rich measure.

CHAPTER 15.

Territory of the Tribe of Judah.

THE BOUNDARIES OF JUDAH. — V. 1. **This, then, was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families,** as it was drawn from the urn or as it fell upon casting; **even to the border of Edom,** the land belonging to the Edomites, south of the Dead Sea, **the Wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast.** The territory of Judah thus extended to the very edge of the great desert in which the people had spent so many weary years. V. 2. **And**

their south border was from the shore of the Salt Sea, the Dead Sea, from the bay that looketh southward, the swampy tongue or branch of the Dead Sea toward the southwest; v. 3. and it went out to the south side to Maaleh-acrabbim, where the country rises to the foothills of the mountains which form the boundary of the wilderness, and passed along to Zin, either a city or a mountain in the Wilderness of Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea, Num. 34, 3, and passed along to Hezron, turning to the west after passing Kadesh, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa; v. 4. from thence it passed toward Azmon,* and went out unto the river of Egypt, Num. 34, 4. 5; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea, the boundary followed this brook or river to the Mediterranean Sea; this shall be your south coast. V. 5. And the east border was the Salt Sea, even unto the end, the mouth, of Jordan. And their border in the north quarter, on the north side, was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan, just where it entered the Dead Sea; v. 6. and the border went up to Beth-hogla, between Jericho and the Jordan, and passed along by the north, that is, northwardly, of Beth-arabah, not far from the northwest end of the Dead Sea; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben, toward the west or southwest; v. 7. and the border went up toward Debir, in the neighborhood of Gilgal, from the Valley of Achor, where Achan was executed, chap. 7, 26, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river, of a small watercourse coming down from the neighborhood of Jerusalem; and the border passed toward the waters of En-shemesh, the sun-spring, some two or three miles northeast of Jerusalem, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel, the fullers' spring on the south side of Jerusalem, at the junction of the Kidron and the Hinnom valleys; v. 8. and the border went up, almost due west, by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite, just below the city of Jerusalem; the same is Jerusalem; and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of the Giants northward, a rocky ridge overlooking the fertile valleys; v. 9. and the border was drawn, brought around, bent, from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, one hour northwest of Jerusalem, and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron, a prominent ridge, and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjath-jearim, three hours northwest of Jerusalem; v. 10. and the border compassed from Baalah westward unto Mount Seir, a small range of hills, and passed along unto the side of Mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, toward the north, a wooded hill, now called Kesla, and went down, on the other side of the mountain, to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah, later the home of Samson, Judg. 14, 1—4; v. 11. and the border went out unto the side of Ekron, the Philistine city, northward; and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to Mount Baalah, a small line of hills running parallel with the coast, and went out unto Jabneel, the small Philistine town of Jabneh; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. V. 12. And the west border was to the Great Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the coast thereof, from Jabneh to the river of Egypt. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families. It was a large and rich territory, well suited for the governing tribe in Israel.

Caleb's Possession. — V. 13. And unto Caleb, the son of Jehunneh, he, Joshua, gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, even the city of Arba, the father of Anak, the ancestor of the Anakim, which city is Hebron. V. 14. And Caleb drove thence, as he had promised, chap. 14, 12, the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. V. 15. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir; and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher, which, meanwhile, seems to have been fortified very strongly. V. 16. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah, my daughter, to wife, this being the reward or prize held out before the young men to spur them on to their best efforts. V. 17. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he, Caleb, gave him Achsah, his daughter, to wife. V. 18. And it came to pass, as she came unto him, on her way over from Hebron in the company of her father, to celebrate the nuptials, that she moved him, her husband-to-be, to ask of her father a field, a piece of land fit for cultivation as her dowry; and she lighted, quickly sprang down, off her ass, thus humbling herself before her father; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? V. 19. Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land, by marrying her to Othniel, he had caused her to inhabit a dry land, at and near Debir; give me also springs of water, a piece of land containing springs. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs, a strip of land well watered in every respect. V. 20. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

This is the subscription or conclusion of the first division of this chapter, with which the description of the bounds of the inheritance of Judah closes.

CATALOG OF THE CITIES OF JUDAH. — V. 21. **And the uttermost of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,** v. 22. **and Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah,** v. 23. **and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,** v. 24. **Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,** v. 25. **and Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron,** or Kerioth-hezron, **which is Hazor,** v. 26. **Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,** v. 27. **and Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet,** v. 28. **and Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba, and Bizjothjah,** v. 29. **Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,** v. 30. **and Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah,** v. 31. **and Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,** v. 32. **and Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon. All the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages,** in addition to which seven cities are named which were afterwards occupied by the tribe of Simeon, chap. 19, 1. These were cities of the south country, in the extreme southern part. V. 33. **And in the valley,** in the lowland and foothills, **Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah,** v. 34. **and Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam,** v. 35. **Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,** v. 36. **and Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages,** for the last two are probably the same city, and the names should be connected with "or." V. 37. **Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-gad,** v. 38. **and Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,** v. 39. **Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,** v. 40. **and Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish,** v. 41. **and Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages.** V. 42. **Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan,** v. 43. **and Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib,** v. 44. **and Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages;** v. 45. **Ekron, with her towns and her villages;** v. 46. **from Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages:** v. 47. **Ashdod, with her towns and her villages, Gaza, with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt and the Great Sea and the border thereof.** V. 48. **And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,** v. 49. **and Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir,** v. 50. **and Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim,** v. 51. **and Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages;** v. 52. **Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,** v. 53. **and Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah,** v. 54. **and Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, and Zior: nine cities with their villages;** v. 55. **Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,** v. 56. **and Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah,** v. 57. **Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages;** v. 58. **Halhul, Bethzur, and Gedor,** v. 59. **and Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages;** v. 60. **Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.** V. 61. **In the wilderness,** near the Dead Sea, **Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah,** v. 62. **and Nibshan, and the City of Salt, and Engedi: six cities with their villages.** Some of these cities, as those in the Philistine country, were not occupied by the tribe of Judah, and others were in the hands of the children of Israel for only a short time. The site of a large number of these cities has been fixed with a fair degree of certainty, while others are mentioned in the various narratives and will be located as the history calls for a more exact geographical description. V. 63. **As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.** It was not till the time of David that this city was finally taken by the army of the Lord's people, 2 Sam. 5, 5—9. It is a dangerous thing for the soldiers of the Lord to grow weary in battle, for then their enemies are likely to gain strength beyond their ability to overcome them.

CHAPTER 16.

The Borders of Ephraim.

THE GENERAL BOUNDARIES OF THE SONS OF JOSEPH. — V. 1. **And the lot of the children of Joseph fell,** came out from the urn or was drawn to give the boundaries, **from Jordan by Jericho,** that part of the Jordan Valley which touches upon the territory of Jericho, **unto the water of Jericho on the east,** the Fountain of Elisha, between Jericho and the Jordan, **to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout Mount Bethel, toward the northwest.** V. 2. **And** (the boundary) **goeth out from Bethel,** from this mountain, **to Luz,** for the ancient name of the city is still used at times, **and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,** southwestward and then south, v. 3. **and goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti,** or, of the Japhletite, **unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether,** located on a slight elevation below Upper Beth-horon, **and to Gezer,** still farther to the west; **and the goings out thereof are at the sea,** the place not being so exactly located as in the case of

Judah. V. 4. **So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance,** their territory being located north of this line, and that of Benjamin between their possession and that of Judah.

The Special Borders of Ephraim. — V. 5. **And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was thus: even the border of their inheritance on the east side,** from the east, beginning where the detailed description of v. 3. ended, **was Ataroth-addar, unto Beth-horon the upper,** and thence onward to the west as in v. 3. V. 6. **And the** (northern) **border,** reckoning from some central point or watershed, **went out toward the sea,** the Mediterranean Sea, **to Michmethah on the north side,** not far from Shechem; **and the border,** from that same central point, **went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh,** southeast of Shechem, **and passed by it on the east to Janohah,** still farther to the southeast; v. 7. **and it went down from Janohah to Ataroth,** probably on the edge of the Jordan Valley, **and to Naarath,** two hours northwest of Jericho, **and came to Jericho,** the territory of this city, **and went out at Jordan,** just about east of Jericho. V. 8. **The border,** the western half of the northern boundary, **went out from Tappuah,** north or northwest of Shechem, **westward unto the river Kanah** (reed-brook); **and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families.** V. 9. **And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim,** certain cities set apart for Ephraimites within the province of the Manassites, **were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.** To these cities Tappuah belonged, chap. 17, 8. V. 10. **And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer,** in the Plain of Sharon; **but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day,** to the time that this book was written, **and serve under tribute,** being subject to tributary service. This foolish indulgence later proved disastrous to the Israelites, for the heathen seduced the people of God to idolatry. Christians who love the world and enter into friendships with unbelievers are in danger of accepting the wrong views of the enemies of God, to the detriment of their souls.

CHAPTER 17.

The Portion of Manasseh.

The Boundaries and Cities. — V. 1. **There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh,** namely, that east of Jordan, which has already been described several times; **for he was the first-born of Joseph; to wit, for Machir, the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead; because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.** Deut. 3, 15. Since Manasseh was the first-born of Joseph, therefore his descendants, in whom the rights of Joseph were vested, received not only a portion in the conquered territory of Og, but also a lot in Canaan proper. V. 2. **There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families,** not only for the descendants of Machir: **for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida,** Num. 26, 30—32; **these were the male children of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, by their families,** the distinction being expressly made in this instance on account of the next statement. V. 3. **But Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters,** Num. 26, 33; 27, 1; 36, 2; **and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.** According to the precept which was formulated at the request of the daughters of Zelophehad at that time, women in a similar position were known as heir-daughters. V. 4. **And they came near before Eleazar, the priest, and before Joshua, the son of Nun, and before the princes,** the official representatives of the people, **saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren,** Num. 27, 2—11. Since the land was now being divided, they claimed their right. **Therefore, according to the commandment of the Lord, he,** Joshua, **gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.** V. 5. **And there fell ten portions to Manasseh,** in the country west of Jordan, **beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan,** v. 6. **because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons,** those of the line of Machir, **had the land of Gilead.** The statement concerning the ten portions allotted to the Manassites is to be understood as follows: "According to this the inheritance coming to the Manassites had to be divided into ten parts, since the male posterity fell into five families, and so received five parts, while the sixth family, that of Hepher, was divided again into five families, through his granddaughters, the five daughters of Zelophehad, who married men of the other families of their paternal tribe and received each her special share of the land." (Keil.) V. 7. **And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher,** a city

some sixteen miles northeast of Shechem, **to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem,** chap. 16, 5; **and the border went along on the right hand,** probably on the south side, **unto the inhabitants,** that is, the territory, **of En-tappuah,** the whole region being mentioned in this case on account of the following statement. V. 8. **Now, Manasseh had the land of Tappuah,** the entire country which had formerly been a Canaanitish city-state; **but Tappuah, on the border of Manasseh, belonged to the children of Ephraim,** for it is the south boundary of Manasseh which is here described; v. 9. **and the coast descended unto the river Kanah** (reed-brook), **southward of the river,** the brook being the boundary, chap. 16, 8. **These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh,** that is, the territory on the south side of the brook really belonged to Manasseh, but the cities on the south side of the brook were Ephraim's. **The coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea.** V. 10. **Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea,** the Mediterranean Sea **is his** (western) **border; and they met together in Asher on the north and in Issachar on the east.** Their territory bounded that of the tribe of Asher north of them, and that of the tribe of Issachar east of them, or to the northeast. The description makes it doubtful whether the portions of Ephraim and Manasseh were intended to be effectually separated. Cp. chap. 16, 1—4. V. 11. **And Manasseh,** in addition to the territory as now described, **had in Issachar and in Asher,** in the territories of these two tribes, **Beth-shean and her towns,** on the edge of the Jordan Valley, east of Mount Gilboa, **and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns,** 1 Sam. 28, 9; Ps. 83, 11, **and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries,** three heights; for three of the cities, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, were situated on hills, and the last-named cities were in the territory of Asher, on the southwest border of the Plain of Esdraelon. V. 12. **Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities,** they made no real effort to exterminate the heathen; **but the Canaanites would dwell in that land,** in the cities allotted to Manasseh. V. 13. **Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.** They were content with making the heathen tributary servants, lacking the spirit which was needed to exterminate them according to the word of the Lord. To become indifferent in the Lord's battle is often equivalent to a surrender to the enemy's forces.

JOSHUA'S ADVICE TO THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH. — V. 14. **And the children of Joseph,** the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, **spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit,** for the two tribes had been treated as one in the division of the land west of Jordan, **seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?** So great had been Jehovah's blessing, that is their contention, up to this time, that they had become a numerous people and needed more room. But their objection was not well taken, for not only were the two tribes together less numerous than either Judah or Dan, but the territory assigned to them was also immensely fertile, the plateaus and valleys of this section of Canaan being unsurpassed in this respect. V. 15. **And Joshua answered them,** in a well-deserved reproof, **If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country,** the wooded range of hills, either to the northeast toward Mount Gilboa, or to the northwest toward Mount Carmel, **and cut down for thyself there,** clear the forest, **in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants,** of the Rephaim, who were still in possession of that country, **if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.** If they would but drive out the heathen who still occupied parts of the territory allotted to them, especially the Plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, in the north, they would have room enough. V. 16. **And the children of Joseph said, The hill,** Mount Ephraim with its tributary ranges, **is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron,** built of wood, but covered with iron, and with heavy iron tires, **both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the Valley of Jezreel.** Here the real reason for the request appears, namely, the unwillingness to undertake the conflict, although Jehovah had promised His assistance. V. 17. **And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph,** denying their request, **even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people and hast great power; thou shalt not have one lot only;** v. 18. **but the mountain shall be thine,** by clearing the forested highlands throughout the territory allotted to them they would, as it were, obtain a second lot or portion; **for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down; and the outgoings of it shall be thine,** the fields and plains adjoining the forests; **for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.** He wanted to direct their thoughts to the promise of God's assistance and encourage them in the task assigned to them. He who desired the blessings of the Promised Land did not dare to give up the battle. He who refuses to fight on the Lord's side virtually surrenders to the enemy and loses the eternal blessings.

CHAPTER 18.

Further Steps toward Permanent Settlement.

The Tabernacle Set Up. — V. 1. **And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh,** a little more than one half the distance between Jerusalem and Shechem, **and set up the Tabernacle of the Congregation there.** Shiloh, approximately in the center of the country, was the city of the Sanctuary for several centuries, until the time of Eli. So the Ark of the Covenant had now found a place of rest and thus served as a sign encouraging the people to strive for the true rest which is reserved for the children of God, Heb. 4. **And the land was subdued before them,** and there was nothing hindering the division of the land. V. 2. **And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance,** Reuben, Gad, Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh having been provided for. V. 3. **And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?** The chief strongholds of the heathen inhabitants had fallen before the vigorous onslaughts of Joshua and the army of Israel, and it now remained merely to take possession of the land and to complete the extermination of the heathen. Apparently the tribes of Israel were not at all eager to exchange the nomadic form of life with that of settled abodes, and the thought of taking possession of their land with their weapons in their hand did not appeal to them. V. 4. **Give out from among you,** select and set forth, **three men for each tribe; and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them,** with reference to its being taken possession of by the seven remaining tribes. Their chief work consisted in their making a list of the cities and their vicinity, the physical aspect of the land, and the condition of the soil. **And they shall come again to me,** their report serving as the basis of the subsequent division of the land. V. 5. **And they shall divide it,** the land still remaining, **into seven parts; Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north,** no changes being made in the possessions of these tribes. V. 6. **Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description,** the list as thus made out, **hither to me,** to Shiloh, **that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord, our God,** probably in the court of the Tabernacle, chap. 19, 51. V. 7. **But the Levites have no part among you,** chap. 13, 33; Num. 18, 20; **for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance,** and as ministers of the Sanctuary they were granted certain privileges which compensated, in a way, for the fact that they had not received a definite section of the Promised Land as their home; **and Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave them,** Num. 32. The weakness of the children of God in waging the war which is their lot in life may easily result in disaster of the worst kind for them.

The Lot of Benjamin. — V. 8. **And the men,** the twenty-one chosen from the tribes, **arose and went away; and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the Lord in Shiloh.** V. 9. **And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities,** with special reference to the cities found throughout the unclaimed sections, **into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua, to the host at Shiloh.** V. 10. **And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord; and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.** V. 11. **And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up,** namely, when it was drawn from the urn, **according to their families; and the coast of their lot,** the territory allotted to them, **came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph,** north of Judah and south of Ephraim. V. 12. **And their border on the north side was from Jordan,** beginning at the river; **and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side,** the site of this city thus being included in the territory of Benjamin, **and went up through the mountains westward,** west and northwest of this city, chap. 16, 1; **and the goings out thereof,** the continuation of the boundary line, **were at the wilderness of Beth-aven,** the bare and rocky heights east of Bethel. V. 13. **And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward,** the city itself thus being included in this territory; **and the border descendeth to Ataroth-adar, near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Beth-horon,** chap. 16, 2. V. 14. **And the border was drawn thence, and compassed the corner of the sea southward,** it turned southward on the western boundary of Benjamin, **from the hill that lieth before Beth-horon southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, a city of the children of Judah,** chap. 15, 9; **this was the west quarter.** V. 15. **And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjath-jearim,** from the boundaries of this city, **and the border went out on the west,** westward, **and went out**

to the well of the waters of Nephtoah, chap. 15, 9; v. 16. and the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the Valley of the Giants on the north, and descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi, Jerusalem, on the south, and descended to En-rogel, v. 17. and was drawn from the north, northward, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth to Geliloth, toward the west, which is over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben, v. 18. and passed along toward the side over against Arabah, the eastern plain, northward, and went down unto Arabah, the plain in which Jericho is situated; v. 19. and the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward; and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the Salt Sea at the south end, the mouth, of Jordan; this was the south coast. This description coincides with that of the north border of Judah, chap. 15, 5—9, only the southeast corner being determined a little more exactly. V. 20. And Jordan was the border of it, Benjamin's territory, on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by their coasts thereof round about, according to their families. V. 21. Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz, Emek-keziz, between Jerusalem and Jericho, v. 22. and Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel, v. 23. and Avim, probably the same as Ai, and Parah, and Ophrah, v. 24. and Chepharhaamonai, and Ophni, and Gaba, some ten miles north of Jerusalem: twelve cities with their villages, those of the eastern half of the territory of Benjamin. V. 25. Gibeon, chap. 10, 1—15, and Ramah, and Beeroth, v. 26. and Mizpeh, 1 Sam. 7, 5—15, and Chephirah, near Gibeon, and Mozah, v. 27. and Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, v. 28. and Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, later known as Gibeah of Saul, 1 Sam. 10, 26; 11, 4; 15, 34, and Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages, all of them in the western part of Benjamin's territory. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

CHAPTER 19.

The Territory of the Six Remaining Tribes.

THE POSSESSION OF SIMEON, ZEBULUN, ISSACHAR, ASHER, NAPHTALI, AND DAN. — V. 1. And the second lot came forth to Simeon, was drawn forth from the urn, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families; and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. Since the territory assigned to the latter tribe was too large for them, Simeon was given certain cities within their boundaries, the curse of Jacob concerning the distribution of Simeon in Jacob, Gen. 49, 7, thus being fulfilled. The tribe of Simeon afterwards practically lost its identity, although the genealogical records were carefully preserved. V. 2. And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, a city known from the time of the patriarchs, in the center of the southern steppes, and Sheba, and Moladah, v. 3. and Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Azem, v. 4. and Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, on the extreme southern boundary, v. 5. and Ziklag, in the Philistine country, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, v. 6. and Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen: thirteen cities and their villages: v. 7. Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages; v. 8. and all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south. All these cities have already, chap. 15, 26—32. 42, been enumerated in the list of the cities of Judah, and are again listed 1 Chron. 4, 28—32. That the prophecy of the scattering was literally fulfilled appears even at this point, for the cities inhabited by Simeon were not even grouped according to any definite plan. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. V. 9. Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon; for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them; therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them, literally, "in the midst of their inheritance," and not in a specially defined part of Canaan. V. 10. And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families; and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid, this city, from the whole description, being the center of the southern boundary; v. 11. and their border went up, from Sarid, toward the sea, westward toward the Mediterranean, and Maralah, and reached to, or struck, Dabbasheth, and reached to, or struck, the river that is before Jokneam, this watercourse very probably being the Kishon, which flows at the foot of the Carmel range; v. 12. and turned from Sarid, as the starting-point, eastward toward the sun-rising unto the border of Chisloth-tabor, on the slopes of Mount Tabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, also in the

foothills of Tabor, a city of the Levites, and goeth up to Japhia, a little farther to the east, v. 13. and from thence passeth on along on the east, still toward the east, to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon[-methoar], which is drawn to Neah, thus extending to a place which was somewhat north of Nazareth; v. 14. and the border compasseth it, the territory of Zebulun, on the north side to Hannathon, this being the eastern boundary, going north; and the outgoings thereof are in the Valley of Jiphthahel, a wide valley extending down toward the Kishon; v. 15. and Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem, these cities indicating the western or northwestern boundary of Zebulun: twelve cities with their villages. V. 16. This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages. It was a fertile country with an outlet to the sea, which assured the inhabitants a participation in its blessings also, as Jacob had foretold. V. 17. And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. V. 18. And their border was toward Jezreel, their territory included the fertile and beautiful Plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, and Chesulloth, and Shunem, on the western slopes of the Little Hermon, appearing several times in later history, v. 19. and Haphraim, or Chepharaim, and Shihon, and Anaharath, v. 20. and Rabbith, and Kishion, or Kedesh, a city of the Levites, and Abez, v. 21. and Remeth, and En-gannim, another Levitical city, with a rich supply of fine water from large springs above the town, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez; v. 22. and the coast reacheth to Tabor, a city on the boundary of Zebulun, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh, in the Jordan Valley, near Mount Tabor; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. V. 23. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages. So Issachar was richly blessed with material prosperity and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the pleasures of life. V. 24. And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. V. 25. And their border was Helkath, a Levitical city northeast of Acco, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, v. 26. and Alammelech, not far from the Kishon, and Amad, on or near the site of the modern Haifa, and Misheal, a Levitical city on the sea, near Mount Carmel; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihor-libnath, a small stream on the southern slopes of Carmel; v. 27. and turneth toward the sun-rising to Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthahel toward the north side of Beth-emek and Neiel, places on the boundary of Zebulun, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand, on the north side of it, four hours southeast of Acco, v. 28. and Hebron, or Abdon, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, even unto great Zidon, the ancient capital of Phenicia. V. 29. And then the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre, fortified strongly even at that time, and later the rich and proud capital of Phenicia; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib, three hours north of Acco; v. 30. Umnah also, and Aphek, and Rehob, in the foothills of the Lebanon range: twenty and two cities with their villages. Thus the territory of Asher extended from the southern slopes of Mount Carmel to Acco along the Mediterranean Sea, and from there to the northern boundary of Canaan, just skirting the narrow coast country of the Phenicians, with the cities Tyre and Sidon. V. 31. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages. Asher was also richly blessed, both the agricultural and the commercial possibilities of the country being exceptionally good. V. 32. The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families. V. 33. And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, northwest of the Sea of Merom, and Adami, on the road that leads through the pass toward Baalbek, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan, the upper Jordan, also above the Waters of Merom; v. 34. and then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah, here apparently a city on the boundary of Asher; upon Jordan toward the sun-rising, for the upper Jordan was Naphtali's eastern boundary. V. 35. And the fenced cities, the fortified towns, are Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth, v. 36. and Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor, v. 37. and Kedesh, and Edrei, not that in Bashan, and En-hazor, v. 38. and Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh, not to be confounded with the cities of the same name in Judah and Issachar: nineteen cities with their villages. So Naphtali's territory was largely in the forested foothills of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. The tribe was a liberty-loving mountain people, for which reason they had been compared by Jacob with a hind let loose. V. 39. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their

villages. V. 40. **And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families.** V. 41. **And the coast of their inheritance,** west of Benjamin, north of Judah, south of Ephraim, **was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh,** three cities of Judah which were yielded to the Danites, the last-named being assigned to the Levites, v. 42. **and Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah,** v. 43. **and Elon, Thimnathah, and Ekron,** chap. 15, 10. 11, v. 44. **and Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath,** v. 45. **and Jehud, and Beneberak, and Gathrimmon,** v. 46. **and Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho,** over against Joppa, or Jaffa, that is, extending to the gardens or suburbs of this flourishing seaport. V. 47. **And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them,** there was hardly room enough for their rapidly growing tribe; **therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem,** or Laish, in the extreme northern part of Canaan, north of the territory of Naphtali, **and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan, their father.** The story of this campaign is related in detail Judg. 18. V. 48. **This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.** The Danites did not occupy the territory allotted to them altogether, being hindered in their attempts by the heathen inhabitants of the plains, Judg. 1, 34, and apparently unable to muster men and courage for a successful venture.

THE INHERITANCE OF JOSHUA. — V. 49. **When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts,** according to the allotment of the various parts of the Promised Land, **the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua, the son of Nun, among them,** a special tract of land belonging to him exclusively; v. 50. **according to the word of the Lord,** probably a divine promise which was given to Joshua at the same time when Caleb was assured a distinct inheritance in Canaan, **they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim,** now the ruins of Tibneh, seven hours north of Jerusalem; **and he built the city and dwelt therein.** V. 51. **These are the inheritances which Eleazar, the priest, and Joshua, the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel,** as the representatives of the people, **divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the Lord,** chap. 18, 1. 10, **at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** before the face, in the presence, of the Lord. **So they made an end of dividing the country.** It was the Lord Himself who decided the division of the country, and in such a manner as to fulfil the prophecies of Jacob and Moses. It is God who distributes to all His children what they need in this life, but the most blessed portion is reserved for them in heaven.

CHAPTER 20.

The Cities of Refuge.

Since the Lord had commanded, Num. 35, that cities of refuge should be chosen in various parts of the country, this matter was next attended to. V. 1. **The Lord also spake unto Joshua, saying,** v. 2. **Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses,** Ex. 21, 13; Num. 35. 6. 11. 14; Deut. 19, 2. 9, v. 3. **that the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly,** without malice, without evil intention, **may flee thither; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood,** as had been provided for in detail by the precepts governing such cases. V. 4. **And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city,** when begging for admission to the safety of its sacred precincts, **and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them,** the preliminary hearing at the gate being made to safeguard their interests, **and give him a place that he may dwell among them.** V. 5. **And if the avenger of blood,** the relative upon whom the duty of requiring an atonement devolved, **pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand, because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime,** the slaying thus evidently being an accident. V. 6. **And he shall dwell in that city until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days; then shall the slayer return and come unto his own city and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.** "He might not be delivered to the avenger of blood, but . . . to the congregation of his own city, which should hold judgment upon him, and either, if they found him guilty, give him up to the avenger of blood or, if they esteemed him innocent, send him back to the city of refuge, where he must remain until the death of the anointed high priest, Num. 35, 25, that is, of the ruling high priest. After the death of the latter there follows, somewhat as upon the

death of an anointed prince, an amnesty, and the manslayer is at liberty to return to his home. If, however, he presumptuously leaves his asylum sooner, he is exposed to the anger of the avenger, Num. 35, 26. 28." 2) V. 7. **And they**, in accordance with this express order of the Lord, **appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali**, in the extreme northern part of Canaan, **and Shechem in Mount Ephraim**, in the approximate center, **and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah**, in the southern part of the land. V. 8. **And on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward**, in the territory of the two and one half tribes, **they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben**, in the south, **and Ramoth in Gilead, out of the tribe of Gad**, in the center, **and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh**, in the north, as Moses had directed, Deut. 4, 43. V. 9. **These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel**, literally, "the cities of appointment," **and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation** and thus had the opportunity of proving the absence of any evil intention in the slaying which had happened. The entire chapter testifies to the grace and mercy of the Lord. We Christians learn here that even sins that are done unintentionally, unwittingly, are nevertheless transgressions of God's holy Law, just as is the inherited tendency to all sins which we bear in our hearts. But God has placed before us the true city of refuge, in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every one who flees to the Redeemer and His mercy, relying upon His atonement alone, will in no wise be cast out.

2) Lange-Schaff, *Joshua*, 164.

CHAPTER 21.

The Cities of the Levites.

The Allotment in General. — V. 1. **Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar, the priest, and unto Joshua, the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel**; v. 2. **and they spake unto them at Shiloh, in the land of Canaan**, where the division of the land had taken place, this city being the capital of the tribes, **saying, The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs**, meadow-lands, **thereof for our cattle**, Num. 35, 2—6. The Levites had not deemed it opportune to urge their claims before, mainly because they knew that they would receive these cities for their habitation only after the other tribes had been given their inheritance. V. 3. **And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their suburbs**, as listed in this catalog, in the present chapter. V. 4. **And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites**, descendants of the second son of Levi, the families of whose three sons, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, together with the descendants of Moses, formed the division of the Kohathite Levites, while the descendants of Aaron were vested with the priesthood. Note that the cities were selected by the Israelites themselves, but that the Lord decided, by directing the drawing of the lots, which of these cities each particular family should have. **And the children of Aaron, the priest, which were of the Levites**, descendants of Levi, **had by lot out of the tribe of Judah and out of the tribe of Simeon and out of the tribe of Benjamin**, all in Southern Canaan, **thirteen cities**. So it was even at this time that the Lord arranged to settle the priests in the cities near the place where He intended to have the permanent Sanctuary. There is never an element of chance in His government of the world and of His Church. V. 5. **And the rest of the children of Kohath**, who were Levites only, **had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim and out of the tribe of Dan and out of the half tribe of Manasseh**, all in Central Canaan, **ten cities**. V. 6. **And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar and out of the tribe of Asher and out of the tribe of Naphtali**, in Northern Canaan, **and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan**, in the northern section of the territory east of Jordan, **thirteen cities**. V. 7. **The children of Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben and out of the tribe of Gad**, in the southern section east of Jordan, **and out of the tribe of Zebulun**, this one portion of Northern Canaan, **twelve cities**. V. 8. **And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs**, their pasture- or meadow-lands, **as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.** While provision was here made also for the future, it should be noted that the priests and Levites did not occupy these cities alone, but other people lived there as well. It was merely that they were sure of a place to live, and that they, by living in the very midst of the people, should serve as an example to the entire nation.

The Cities of the Priests. — V. 9. **And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah and out of the tribe of the chil-**

dren of Simeon, out of the possessions allotted to these tribes, these cities which are here mentioned by name, v. 10. which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had; for theirs was the first lot. V. 11. And they gave them the city of Arba, the father of Anak, chap. 15, 13. 14, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof found about it, the grazing-land for cattle immediately adjoining the city. V. 12. But the fields of the city, the farm-land, and the villages thereof, the towns tributary to it, gave they to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, for his possession, chap. 14, 12—14. V. 13. Thus they gave to the children of Aaron, the priest, Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer, for this it was at the same time, chap. 20, 7; and Libnah with her suburbs, v. 14. and Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, v. 15. and Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs, v. 16. and Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Beth-shemesh with her suburbs: nine cities out of those two tribes, all of them being mentioned in the catalog of the cities of Judah and of Simeon, chap. 15, 21—62; 19, 7. V. 17. And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, a fact which tended to curb any idolatrous notions of its heathen inhabitants, chap. 9, Geba with her suburbs, v. 18. Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs, chap. 18, 24. 25; 1 Chron. 6, 60: four cities. V. 19. All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs. Thus the men in charge of the worship in the Jewish Church were provided for with all that they needed to support their body and life, even as it is the will of the Lord to-day that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

THE CITIES OF THE KOHATHITES, THE GERSHONITES, AND THE MERARITES. — V. 20. And the families of the children of Kohath, the descendants of Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, and of Moses, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, namely, after the priests, the children of Aaron, had received their allotment, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. V. 21. For they gave them, the Levites, Shechem with her suburbs in Mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer, chap. 20, 7; and Gezer with her suburbs, v. 22. and Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs: four cities. V. 23. And out of the tribe of Dan, El-tekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, v. 24. Aijalon with her suburbs, Gath-rimmon with her suburbs, chap. 19, 42—45: four cities. V. 25. And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, west of Jordan, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon, or, Bileam (Ibleam), with her suburbs, chap. 17, 11: two cities. V. 26. All the cities were ten with their suburbs, their meadow-lands, for the families of the children of Kohath that remained. V. 27. And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh, east of Jordan, they gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer, chap. 20, 8; and Beesh-terah with her suburbs: two cities. V. 28. And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs, v. 29. Jarmuth with her suburbs, En-gannim with her suburbs, chap. 19, 12—21: four cities. V. 30. And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs, v. 31. Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs, chap. 19, 25—28: four cities. V. 32. And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer, chap. 20, 7; and Hammoth-dor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs, chap. 19, 35—37: three cities. V. 33. All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs. V. 34. And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, the last family to be supplied, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs and Kartah with her suburbs, v. 35. Dimnah, or Rimmono, with her suburbs, Nahalal, or Tabor, with her suburbs, chap. 19, 11—15: four cities. V. 36. And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer, with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs, v. 37. Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs, chap. 20, 8; 13, 18; Deut. 4, 43: four cities. V. 38. And out of the tribe of Gad, in Southern Gilead, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs, v. 39. Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs, chap. 20, 8; 13, 17—26: four cities in all. V. 40. So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities. V. 41. All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs, including the six cities set apart as cities of refuge. V. 42. These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them, the meadow-land was distinctly included for the perpetual use of the Levites; thus were all these cities. V. 43. And the Lord, by this distribution of the country, gave unto

Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers, Gen. 12, 7; 15, 18; Num. 11, 12; Deut. 21, 12; **and they possessed it and dwelt therein.** V. 44. **And the Lord gave them rest round about,** all the heathen nations being subdued for the time being, **according to all that He sware unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them,** not one was able to offer a successful resistance; **the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.** Although not entirely subjugated, the enemies were in a condition where they dared no enterprise against the Israelites while Joshua lived. V. 45. **There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.** God is always faithful in His promises, but we, through unbelief and indifference, stand in His way. Perfection, true happiness, lasting joy, will be ours in the rest of yonder life, Heb. 4.

CHAPTER 22.

The Return of the Two and One Half Tribes.

The Dismissal. — V. 1. **Then,** namely, at some time after the conquest of Canaan, probably after the division of the land was completed, **Joshua called the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh,** the soldiers out of these tribes, who had served in the army of Israel during these years of conquest, chap. 1, 12—15, v. 2. **and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you,** Num. 32, 20; Deut. 3, 18, **and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you,** to which they had agreed before the people passed over Jordan. V. 3. **Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day,** having been thoroughly loyal to the obligations of relationship, **but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord, your God.** All this the praise of Joshua duly acknowledges, as an encouragement to further efforts in unselfish assistance. V. 4. **And now the Lord, your God, hath given rest unto your brethren, as He promised them; therefore, now, return ye, and get you unto your tents,** a standing expression for returning home, **and unto the land of your possession, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you on the other side Jordan,** Num. 32, 33; Deut. 29, 8. V. 5. **But take diligent heed,** watch with the greatest carefulness, **to do the commandment and the Law,** both that of the general Moral Law and that of the special precepts given to Israel, **which Moses, the servant of the Lord, charged you, to love the Lord, your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.** This parting admonition of Joshua shows his understanding of the human heart with its changeableness, deceitfulness, and wickedness. Cp. Deut. 4, 2. 29; 6, 5; 8, 6. V. 6. **So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away,** dismissed them honorably; **and they went unto their tents,** they started for their homes on the east side of Jordan. V. 7. **Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh,** to the children of Machir, **Moses had given possession in Bashan; but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward.** This is here repeated in order to make the situation perfectly clear, according to the ancient style of Hebrew narrative. **And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them,** v. 8. **and he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches,** their share of the booty of the wars, **unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment,** for the cities of the Canaanites which they had captured, beginning with Ai, had contained great treasures, all of which fell into the hands of the invaders. **Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren,** namely, the sixty to seventy thousand who had remained to garrison the cities east of Jordan and to protect the homes and the herds of the two and one half tribes while the conquest of Canaan proper was going on. V. 9. **And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses,** Num. 32, 20—22. That is the important thing, not only to come to the Lord, but to continue in His Word, to love Him with all one's heart, and with all one's soul, and with all one's mind, and to show this love in one's entire life.

The Building of the Altar and the Investigation Following. — V. 10. **And when they came unto the borders of Jordan that are in the land of Canaan,** the regions of Jordan, the valley proper of Jordan, in this case probably the eastern side, as the context seems to indicate, **the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan,** on the very boundary line of their possession, **a great altar to see to,** great-looking,

great in appearance, great as compared with other altars. V. 11. **And the children of Israel,** the ten western tribes, **heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders,** circles, regions, **of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel,** in the land opposite the sons of Israel. V. 12. **And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel,** all the able-bodied men, **gathered themselves together at Shiloh to go up to war against them,** for they took the erection of this altar as an evidence of apostasy, as a transgression of God's precept concerning the unity of the altar of burnt offering, Lev. 17, 8. 9; Deut. 12, 4—14, and therefore prepared to carry out His command of extermination upon the apostate tribes, Deut. 13. V. 13. **And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh,** as the ordinance of Jehovah provided, Deut. 13, 14, **into the land of Gilead,** the general designation of the land east of Jordan, **Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the priest,** who had once before distinguished himself by his zeal for the Lord, v. 14. **and with him ten princes,** heads of father-houses, **of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel,** that rank at least the men selected had to hold; **and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.** V. 15. **And they came unto the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,** Phinehas probably acting as the spokesman: v. 16. **Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel,** in open rebellion against Jehovah, **to turn away this day from following the Lord,** by an act of faithlessness and disloyalty, **in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord?** Even though the language may be considered strong, the zeal which prompted it was, at any rate, praiseworthy, since the altar, although not built for a place of sacrifice, yet might easily be perverted to that use, and lead the whole people into the sin of idolatry. At all events, the two and one half tribes ought not to have undertaken the building of this altar without first consulting with Joshua or with the high priest. V. 17. **Is the iniquity of Peor,** when the Midianite women seduced the men of Israel to adultery and idolatry, **too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day,** for it seems that many Israelites in their hearts were still idolaters, lacking only the courage to show their preference openly, **although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord,** consuming a total of 24,000 people, v. 18. **but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord? And it will be, seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord, that to-morrow He will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel,** for Jehovah would hold all the tribes responsible for the defection of those east of Jordan. V. 19. **Notwithstanding,** and indeed, **if the land of your possession be unclean,** making it necessary for them to have an altar for the expiation of sins in their immediate neighborhood, **then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord,** Canaan proper, west of Jordan, **wherein the Lord's Tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us; but rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord, our God,** who had commanded that the altar of the Tabernacle should be the only one erected for His worship and would seriously punish the erection of any altar to another god. V. 20. **Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit a trespass in the accursed thing,** in taking of spoil devoted to Jehovah, chap. 7, 1. 5, **and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man perished not alone in his iniquity,** since not only his children were involved, but also, through the unfortunate attack on Ai, the entire congregation. Thus did the ten tribes voice their zeal for Jehovah through their delegates.

THE EXPLANATION MADE AND ACCEPTED. — V. 21. **Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered,** in defending themselves against the reproach and charge made against them, **and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,** v. 22. **The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods,** or, God, God Jehovah, repeated for the sake of impressiveness, in the form of a solemn oath, **He knoweth, and Israel, he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord,** or, Surely not in rebellion and surely not in disloyalty toward Jehovah was this done. And in order to remove every doubt concerning the truth of their assertion, they include an imprecation upon themselves in case their words should be found false: **(Save us not this day,)** namely, if it was done in apostasy. The oath is now continued, v. 23. **That we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord,** with idolatrous intention, **or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon,** in flagrant disobedience against the Lord's command, **let the Lord Himself require it,** by visiting the transgressors with His punishment; v. 24. **and if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children,** those of the Israelites west of Jordan, **might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the**

Lord God of Israel? V. 25. **For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord; so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.** So it was their anxiety for their children and for the latter's possible exclusion from the worship of Jehovah, the true God, which had prompted the two and one half tribes to erect the great altar on the bank of the Jordan. V. 26. **Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice,** v. 27. **but that it may be a witness between us and you and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before Him,** have the right to appear at the Tabernacle and worship Jehovah, **with our burnt offerings and with our sacrifices and with our peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord.** V. 28. **Therefore said we that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern,** copy, likeness, **of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you.** V. 29. **God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the Lord, our God, that is before His Tabernacle.** So this copy of Jehovah's altar was simply to serve as a witness of the fact that the tribes on both sides of Jordan worshiped the same God. V. 30. **And when Phinehas, the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them,** the explanation satisfied them in every way. V. 31. **And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the priest, said unto the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the Lord is among us,** the entire nation, **because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord,** the disloyalty of which the western tribes suspected them; **now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord,** for He would surely have visited the iniquity of the offending tribes upon the whole people if they had been guilty. V. 32. **And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the priest, and the princes returned from the children of Reuben and from the children of Gad out of the land of Gilead,** east of Jordan, **unto the Land of Canaan,** the Land of Promise in the narrower sense, **to the children of Israel,** the ten western tribes, **and brought them word again.** V. 33. **And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God,** thanking Him for adjusting the matter in such a satisfactory way, **and did not intend,** had no further thought, **to go up against them in battle, to destroy,** devastate, **the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.** V. 34. **And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed; for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God.** The entire sentence served as the name of the altar, for it should be regarded as a continual witness, for all times, that the tribes east of Jordan also accepted Jehovah as the one true God. It is well-pleasing to God if Christians are zealous for His honor, but He also expects us to discuss matters which may lead to quarrels in a proper, brotherly manner, lest we harm some one by an unjust suspicion.

CHAPTER 23.

Admonition to Be Faithful to the Covenant.

THE URGENT EXHORTATION TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE LORD. — V. 1. **And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about,** when the heathen nations had been brought to a state of fear which kept them from undertaking any attack against Israel, **that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age,** advanced in days, with the infirmities of old age in evidence. V. 2. **And Joshua called for all Israel, in its representatives, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers,** the first designation being the general one, and the heads being divided into judges and officers, both the judicial and the executive branches of the government thus being represented, **and said unto them,** the meeting taking place either at his home, at Timnath-serah, or, more probably, at Shiloh, **I am old and stricken in age;** v. 3. **and ye have seen all that the Lord, your God, hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord, your God, is He that hath fought for you,** for it had been evident throughout that the Lord was battling for Israel. V. 4. **Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, those that had not yet been exterminated, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the Great Sea westward,** toward the

going down of the sun; for tribes of the heathen nations were still living in the Valley of Jordan and in parts of the plain along the coast of the Mediterranean. But these sections had been included in the allotment of land, and so the duty of driving them out was before the people. V. 5. **And the Lord, your God, He shall expel them from before you,** thrust them out altogether, **and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land as the Lord, your God, hath promised unto you,** Ex. 23, 23; Num. 33, 53. V. 6. **Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses,** for that was the condition of the covenant upon which the Lord insisted, **that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;** v. 7. **that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you,** to enter into any fellowship with them; **neither make mention of the name of their gods,** namely, for the purpose of calling upon them or of proclaiming them, to swear by them, to serve them by offerings, and to bow down to them in prayer, Ex. 23, 13; Deut. 6, 13; 10, 20, as Joshua adds; **nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them;** v. 8. **but cleave unto the Lord, your God, as ye have done unto this day,** for the congregation as such had adhered firmly to the worship of Jehovah while Joshua was leader. V. 9. **For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong,** Deut. 4, 38; **but** (or "and") **as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day,** the assistance of Jehovah making them invincible and giving them the power to conquer everything before them, Deut. 7, 24. V. 10. **One man of you shall chase a thousand,** as Moses had promised, Lev. 26, 8; Deut. 32, 30; **for the Lord, your God, He it is that fighteth for you, as He hath promised you,** Ex. 14, 14; 23, 27; Deut. 3, 22. V. 11. **Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves,** they were to watch very carefully over their own souls, in keeping them in the Law of the Lord, **that ye love the Lord, your God;** for this love is the fulfilment of the Law. V. 12. **Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations,** be joined to them in friendship and affection, **even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them,** thus entering into the most intimate relationship with them and setting aside the loyalty toward Jehovah, **and go in unto them and they to you,** in a social fellowship and intercourse which the Lord had forbidden them, Ex. 34, 12—16; Deut. 7, 3, v. 13. **know for a certainty that the Lord, your God, will no more drive out any of these nations from before you,** an achievement which was possible only with His assistance, **but they shall be snares and traps unto you,** Num. 33, 55; Is. 8, 14. 15, **and scourges in your sides,** to punish them, **and thorns in your eyes,** infinitely more painful than motes, **until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord, your God, hath given you.** Joshua heaps the figures picturing the affliction and the misery which would follow their act of disloyalty in entering into friendships and other intimate relationships with the heathen nations; for the Lord knew that no warning could be made too impressive in this connection. The blessings of God's goodness should be the strongest inducement to all Christians to cling to Him alone with all their heart and to shun all intimacy with the children of this world.

AN EARNEST WARNING. — V. 14. **And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth,** for Joshua was on his way to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; **and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord, your God, spake concerning you,** not a single word, a single promise of the Lord fell to the ground, became void, remained unfulfilled, as they well knew; **all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.** But the very greatness of the Lord's goodness and mercy laid additional obligations upon the whole people. V. 15. **Therefore it shall come to pass that, as all good things are come upon you which the Lord, your God, promised you, so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things,** as He had threatened, Lev. 26, 14—33; Deut. 28, 15—68, **until He have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord, your God, hath given you.** V. 16. **When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord, your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods,** for faithfulness to Jehovah was the essence of the covenant, **and bowed yourselves to them, then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which He hath given unto you,** Deut. 11, 17. To abstain from intimacy with the world is a form of protecting our souls. Carelessness in this respect may result in the loss of our inheritance and in bringing God's wrath and curse upon us.

CHAPTER 24.

Joshua's Farewell Address and Death.

A REVIEW OF GOD'S MERCIES. — V. 1. **And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem,** a gigantic assembly of people in the place which was hallowed by so many memories, ever since the time of Abraham, **and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers,** chap. 23, 2; **and they presented themselves before God,** for this last appeal was made in the name of Jehovah. V. 2. **And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,** as whose representative Joshua was here addressing the people, **Your fathers,** progenitors, **dwelt on the other side of the flood,** of the great stream Euphrates, **in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor,** who lived first in Ur of the Chaldees and then in Haran, Gen. 11, 28. 31; **and they,** Terah with his family, **served other gods,** namely, teraphim, Gen. 31, 19. V. 3. **And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood,** the great river Euphrates, out of these dangerous surroundings, **and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac,** in making true the promise concerning his great progeny. V. 4. **And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau,** Gen. 25, 24; **and I gave unto Esau Mount Seir to possess it,** Gen. 36, 8; Deut. 2, 5; **but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt,** Gen. 46, 1. 6. Thus everything was prepared for the second great proof of God's mercy, the miraculous deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. V. 5. **I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them,** in the matter of the great plagues, Ex. 7—10; **and afterward I brought you out,** Ex. 12. V. 6. **And I brought your fathers out of Egypt,** Ex. 12, 51; **and ye came unto the sea,** the Red Sea, Ex. 14, 2; **and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea,** Ex. 14, 9. V. 7. **And when they cried unto the Lord, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians,** Ex. 14, 10. 20, **and brought the sea upon them, and covered them,** Ex. 14, 27; **and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt,** in punishing both the land and the people; **and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season,** forty years, chap. 5, 6. The entire description is a noble, impressive account. The Lord now recalls the third proof of His favor and merciful kindness. V. 8. **And I brought you into the land of the Amorites,** this one name standing for all the heathen nations, but here designating the two branches of this nation dwelling east of Jordan, **which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you,** the armies of Sihon and of Og, Num. 21, 21. 33; **and I gave them into your hand that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.** V. 9. **Then Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, he made ready for a campaign against Israel, in case he could get Balaam to curse the invaders, and sent and called Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse you,** Num. 22, 5, since he lacked the courage to attack Israel outright; v. 10. **but I would not hearken unto Balaam,** Jehovah frustrated the evil intentions of the soothsayer; **therefore he blessed you still, in spite of himself; so I delivered you out of his hand.** Thus were the plans of Balak overthrown and everything made ready for the fourth proof of God's favor, the conquest of Canaan proper. V. 11. **And ye went over Jordan,** by a miraculous passage, chap. 3, 14, **and came unto Jericho; and the men of Jericho fought against you,** chap. 6, 1, and not only they, but also **the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites,** chap. 3, 10; **and I delivered them into your hand.** V. 12. **And I sent the hornet before you,** in terrifying the nations of the land, Ex. 23, 28; Deut. 7, 20, **which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites,** Sihon and Og, as representatives of the entire heathen host; **but not with thy sword nor with thy bow,** for it was not Israel's prowess which had subdued the land. V. 13. **And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat.** Thus Israel, without any merit on its part, through God's goodness and merciful kindness alone, had received a glorious land, a rich and fertile country, in whose cultivation they were not obliged to labor in the sweat of their brow, but which was given to them in the finest condition, ready to enjoy. We Christians are also obliged to confess, with regard to both the temporal and the spiritual blessings of the Lord, that we are not worthy of the least of all His benefits.

THE EXACTION OF THE PROMISE TO BE FAITHFUL. — V. 14. **Now, therefore,** with all these blessings and merciful kindnesses in mind, **fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth,** without all pretense and feigned devotion, for all hypocrisy and false piety is an abomination in the sight of the Lord; **and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood,** in Mesopotamia, **and in Egypt,** for heathenish, idolatrous superstition was still found among the people, although not in its gross form, Lev. 17, 7; **and serve ye the**

Lord. V. 15. **And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord,** for true service requires the conviction of the heart, **choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood,** beyond Euphrates, **or the gods of the Amorites,** the Canaanitish nations, **in whose land ye dwell,** this form of challenge being the very strongest admonition to loyalty. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.** This declaration of Joshua, with all its simplicity, contained a mighty appeal, just as all similar confessions do, arousing the sluggish and strengthening the weak to rally around the Lord. V. 16. **And the people,** evidently deeply affected by Joshua's fervent sincerity, **answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods,** the very idea of such apostasy was far from their minds; v. 17. **for the Lord, our God, He it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went,** as the Lord had reminded them in the address of Joshua, **and among all the people through whom we passed;** v. 18. **and the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land,** as they here gratefully acknowledge; **therefore will we also serve the Lord, for He is our God.** They turn from the service of other gods with every indication of extreme loathing, of deep aversion. V. 19. **And Joshua said unto the people,** in testing the sincerity of their position, **Ye cannot serve the Lord,** that is, not without His assistance, for He it is who must work both to will and to do; **for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God,** Ex. 19, 6; 20, 5; **He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.** So they should not promise faithfulness lightly, but in the full consciousness of the import of their words. V. 20. **If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods,** Gen. 35, 4, **then He will turn,** assume an entirely different attitude toward them, **and do you hurt and consume you after that He hath done you good.** Jehovah demands unwavering loyalty, steadfast allegiance. V. 21. **And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord.** They persist in their determination and uphold their resolution. V. 22. **And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves,** their declaration would serve as a testimony against them, **that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve Him. And they said, We are witnesses.** They fully agreed to all that Joshua had said. V. 23. **Now, therefore, put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you,** even the last remnant of idolatrous superstition, **and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel,** who demands all the heart, all the soul, and all the mind in His service. V. 24. **And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord, our God, will we serve, and His voice will we obey.** It was the third solemn assurance of loyalty and obedience. V. 25. **So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day,** in exacting this promise from them, **and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.** It was a second renewal of the covenant made with Israel on Mount Sinai, Ex. 19, 20; Deut. 28, 69. It is a great and serious thing to serve the Lord, a matter which no man can perform in his own reason and strength, but only in the strength of the grace of God.

JOSHUA'S DEATH AND BURIAL. — V. 26. **And Joshua wrote these words,** the entire account of the renewal of the covenant, **in the Book of the Law of God,** as an addition to the law-book of Moses, **and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the Sanctuary of the Lord,** in the space consecrated by the altars of Abraham and Jacob, Gen. 12, 7; 33, 20, and by the solemn service which had been held there shortly after the coming of Israel into the Land of Promise, chap. 7, 30. V. 27. **And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness,** a monument and memorial, **unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us,** during the meeting which had gone before; **it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God,** it would always serve to remind them of their solemn promise, lest they deny Jehovah by thought, word, or deed. V. 28. **So Joshua let the people depart; every man unto his inheritance,** to his possession in the section of the country allotted to his tribe. V. 29. **And it came to pass after these things that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord,** as he is now also called in recognition of his loyalty to Jehovah, **died, being an hundred and ten years old,** as his progenitor, the patriarch Joseph, before him. V. 30. **And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in Mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash,** evidently a well-known hill at that time, Judg. 2, 9; 2 Sam. 23, 30. V. 31. **And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua,** literally, "whose days extended beyond those of Joshua," **and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel.** The experiences which these men had gone through in their youth and early manhood served to keep them loyal to the covenant God, and their example influenced the people accordingly. V. 32. **And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt buried**

they in Shechem, Gen. 50, 25. in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver, Gen. 33, 19; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. This was in their territory, on the boundary between Manasseh and Ephraim, and thus belonged to them in a twofold sense of the word, by inheritance and by allotment.

V. 33. **And Eleazar, the son of Aaron, died,** the second high priest whom Israel had had; **and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas, his son, that is,** at Gibeah-Phinehas, a city in central Canaan, **which was given him in Mount Ephraim.** Thus the righteous enter into their reward and rest in the security of their tombs to the great day of resurrection.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Judges covers a period of some three hundred and fifty years, from approximately 1440 to 1090 B. C. It is named from the heroes who were appointed by God as leaders of Israel in the period succeeding Joshua and ending with the rise of Samuel. The exploits of these champions of Israel, whom the Lord endowed with miraculous power in conquering their heathen enemies, form the central and principal part of the book. They are called Judges because they held the highest civil authority in the nation, and they are called Saviors because they repeatedly delivered Israel from its enemies.

The author, after characterizing the political condition and the religious life of Israel during the time of the Judges, gives a brief account of the Judges themselves. The following Judges are named in the book: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, the woman Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. The deeds of Deborah and Barak, of Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson against the Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines are treated in greater detail than the others.

Of the general character of the period the following may be said. In his farewell address Joshua had earnestly warned the people against idolatry and solemnly exhorted them to remain faithful to Jehovah, the God of their fathers. They gave their solemn promise, which was kept for that one generation. But their children and descendants turned from the Lord to idolatry and provoked Him to anger. When the Lord thereupon punished them by giving them into the hands of their enemies to spoil them, they repented and walked in the ways of Jehovah until they had been delivered. But the lesson was invariably soon forgotten; the people relapsed into idolatry, and thus sin, punishment, repentance, and deliverance followed in succession through those centuries. The purpose of the book is to offer a history of Israel from the death of Joshua to the days of Samuel in an account of the chief events and thus to demonstrate the working of the divine justice and mercy as a lesson for all future generations.

Regarding the authorship of the Book of Judges, no definite statement can be made. It was not written before the time of Samuel and probably at a time when Israel already had a king. The ancient tradition which names Samuel as the author may well be correct. The Jewish Talmud makes this assertion with great emphasis, and the vivid presentation seems to point to this prophet, for which reason modern critics have rarely called the statement into question. It may be added that the activity of the Judges is mentioned in both the Old and the New Testament, and that they have always been regarded as types of Christ, the eternal Redeemer of His people.[1])

1) Cp. *Concordia Bible Class*, Mar., 1919, 35. 36; Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 27—29.

CHAPTER 1.

Political Conditions of the Period.

OVERTHROW OF VARIOUS ENEMIES. — V. 1. **Now, after the death of Joshua,** which was related in the last chapter of the Book of Joshua, **it came to pass,** as the author states in taking up the thread of the narrative, **that the children of Israel asked the Lord,** through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, Num. 27, 21, **saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first to fight against them?** Joshua had very emphatically enjoined upon them the extermination of the tribes of Canaan which still remained, and therefore the question of the representatives of the entire nation was who it was to be that should initiate the aggressive measures, to which tribe the leadership had been assigned in beginning the final conquest of the land. V. 2.

And the Lord said, Judah shall go up, for this tribe had been made the leader and champion of Israel even by the blessing of Jacob, Gen. 49, 8—10; **behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.** As it pleased the Lord to receive the inquiry of the people in this manner, so He gave the promise of His divine assistance in the coming struggle. V. 3. **And Judah said unto Simeon, his brother,** the tribe having its cities in the midst of the possession of Judah, Josh. 19, 1—9, **Come up with me into my lot,** share my lot with me, join forces with me in this undertaking, **that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot,** join forces with him in conquering the cities allotted to him. **So Simeon went with him.** V. 4. **And Judah went up,** reenforced by the army of Simeon; **and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites,** who evidently had gained the necessary courage to join their forces at this time, with the purpose of ejecting the invaders, **into their hand; and they slew of them in Bezek,** a place not yet definitely identified, **ten thousand men.** V. 5. **And they found Adoni-bezek,** the leader of the heathen forces, **in Bezek;** they met his armies there, having been informed of their presence and of their hostile intention; **and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.** V. 6. **And Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and great toes,** making it impossible for him to use his bow or to escape. V. 7. **And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table;** after mutilating them in this manner, he had forced them to pick up their food under his table, where he threw them scraps as he might have done to hungry dogs. **As I have done, so God hath requited me;** he realized and confessed that he was but receiving his just deserts, that the tribe of Judah simply recompensed him by the direction of God. **And they,** apparently his own servants, **brought him to Jerusalem,** for which reason some commentators think that this was his home, **and there he died,** under the just punishment of God. V. 8. **Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem,** literally, "And there fought the sons of Judah against Jerusalem"; for they followed up the advantage which they had gained and attacked the city which sheltered Adoni-bezek, **and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.** Thus the power of this king was definitely broken, although the army of Judah did not take, or retain possession of, the city at this time, probably because they expected the tribe of Benjamin to occupy the stronghold. V. 9. **And afterward,** after the taking of Jerusalem, **the children of Judah,** with their allies, **went down to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain,** in the highland of Judah, **and in the south,** the steppes toward the southeast and south, **and in the valley,** the lowland in the west, including Philistia. V. 10. **And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron,** under the leadership of Caleb; **(now the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba;)** and they slew **Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai,** the three sons of Anak; for after the first conquest of the city by Joshua the Anakim had reoccupied it. V. 11. **And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir,** a city some ten miles southwest of Hebron; **and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher;** v. 12. **and Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah, my daughter, to wife.** V. 13. **And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah, his daughter, to wife.** V. 14. **And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?** V. 15. **And she said unto him, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.** This paragraph, which agrees exactly with Josh. 15, 14—19, is here repeated to make the zeal of Caleb, the unselfishness of Othniel, and the prudence of Achsah points of instruction. "The thing to be especially noted, however, is the firmness of Othniel in resisting his wife's enticement to make requests which it is more becoming in her to make. Not many men have so well withstood the ambitious and eagerly craving projects of their wives." (Lange.) V. 16. **And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law,** whom Moses had apparently persuaded to join Israel, Num. 10, 29—32, **went up out of the city of palm-trees,** Jericho, Deut. 34, 3, **with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad,** a district about eight hours south of Hebron, whose king had attacked Israel during the march through the wilderness, Num. 21, 1; **and they went and dwelt among the people,** in the immediate neighborhood of Judah, with whom they were allied. V. 17. **And Judah went with Simeon, his brother,** according to the promise made v. 3, **and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath,** on the boundary of the desert, **and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah,** a name sometimes given to it before, but now definitely connected with it, Num. 21, 2; 1 Sam. 30, 29. V. 18. **Also Judah,** carrying the campaign into the land of the Philistines, **took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof,** three city-

states with the smaller towns tributary to them. These the army of Judah took by storm, in a sudden onslaught, but did not garrison them and therefore soon lost them again. V. 19. **And the Lord was with Judah,** in this campaign of swift destruction; **and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain,** where personal valor and strength were the chief factors in battle; **but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.** When it came to a contest with these engines of destruction, the faith of the soldiers of Judah failed them, causing them to abandon the duty of gaining entire mastery of the land. V. 20. **And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said,** this taking place after the completion of the conquest, when the entire tribe entered upon its possessions; **and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.** Thus the aged hero received the gift which had been promised him. Every one who takes part in the suffering and in the fighting of the people of God will in the end take part in the glorious heritage of the children of God.

VARIOUS HEATHEN LEFT IN CANAAN. — V. 21. **And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem,** who returned to the city as soon as the armies of Judah and Simeon marched southward; **but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.** This notice is here inserted partly to show that the conquered city did not remain in the hands of Israel, partly to indicate that Judah had no intention of permanently occupying a city allotted to Benjamin. V. 22. **And the house of Joseph,** the Manassites and Ephraimites, **they also went up against Bethel,** a strongly fortified city, whose men had marched to the assistance of Ai, Josh. 8, 17; **and the Lord was with them.** V. 23. **And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel,** a scouting party. **(Now the name of the city before was Luz,** namely, in ancient times, when the country was still in the hands of the Canaanites.) "As Jebus indicated particularly the fortress, Jerusalem the city, — although the latter name also embraced both, — so a similar relation must be assumed to have existed between Bethel and Luz. Otherwise the border of Benjamin could not have run south of Luz, Josh. 18, 13, while nevertheless Bethel was reckoned among the cities of Benjamin, Josh. 18, 22." (Lange.) It was thus the old section of the city, the fortress part, against which the expedition was directed. V. 24. **And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city,** after they had vainly sought a suitable place for a successful assault, **and they said unto him, Show us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city,** some way of entering it unawares, **and we will show thee mercy,** spare him and his family as a reward for this assistance. V. 25. **And when he showed them the entrance into the city,** apparently some hidden passage, thus making it unnecessary to storm the city, **they smote the city,** all the inhabitants, **with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family;** he, like Rahab, saved the life of his entire family by his service to the army of the Lord. V. 26. **And the man went into the land of the Hittites,** very likely in the mountains of the north or in Phenicia, **and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz; which is the name thereof unto this day.** V. 27. **Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns,** on the border of the Jordan Valley, **nor Taanach and her towns,** farther to the west in the Plain of Esdraelon, **nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns,** on the coast of the Mediterranean, **nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns,** these two also being located in the beautiful Plain of Jezreel; **but the Canaanites would dwell in that land,** accepting the proposals or conditions of the conquerors. V. 28. **And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute,** this being true of all the tribes in general, **and did not utterly drive them out.** The children of Israel disregarded the command to exterminate the Canaanites, even when they were in a position to carry it out. V. 29. **Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer,** a town four or five miles east of the present Joppa or Jaffa; **but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.** V. 30. **Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them and became tributaries,** while they occupied their pastures and meadows. V. 31. **Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho,** on the coast of the Mediterranean, north of Carmel, **nor the inhabitants of Zidon,** the ancient capital of Philistia, **nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob,** all of these in the foothills of the Lebanon or on the Phenician coast; v. 32. **but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.** V. 33. **Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them.** V. 34. **And the Amorites,** in the lower part of the Plain of Sharon, along the Mediterranean, **forced the children of Dan into the mountain; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley;** v. 35. **but the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim,** since they were provided

with all the appliances of military art and had resisted even Judah; **yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed**, rested very heavily upon the Amorites, **so that they became tributaries.** V. 36. **And the coast of the Amorites**, at the time of the conquest of the land, **was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward**, from the Scorpion-height in the southeast over to the extreme southwest, where the mountains arise that fringe the Wilderness of Zin. From this entire country they had been driven and now retained only a small part of the Mediterranean lowland, just north of Philistia. The history, as here presented, has many analogies in the spiritual field. Many a Christian who started out with a willing mind has become weary of the continual battle, has permitted the enemies to reoccupy lost territory, and so has lost everything he had gained.

CHAPTER 2.

The Changing Conditions.

THE REPROOF OF THE ANGEL OF THE LORD. — V. 1. **And an Angel of the Lord**, that is, the Angel of the Lord, who is equal to the Lord in essence, who had brought up Israel out of Egypt and led them to the Land of Promise, **came up from Gilgal**, where He had revealed Himself to Joshua as the Prince of the host of Jehovah, **to Bochim**, a place where the representatives of the people were assembled at that time, **and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt**, the speaker thus expressly identifying Himself with Jehovah, **and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you**, Gen. 17, 7. V. 2. **And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land**, never enter into entangling alliances with them; **ye shall throw down their altars**, utterly destroy all evidences of idolatry. **But ye have not obeyed My voice**, they had done just that against which they had been warned; **why have ye done this?** This is not merely a sorrowful exclamation, but a searching question, a call to repentance, a reproof because they had spared the Canaanites and had permitted their altars to remain. V. 3. **Wherefore I also said**, through the mouth of Joshua, Josh. 23, 13, **I will not drive them out from before you**, as a punishment of their disobedience, **but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you**, Ex. 23, 33. "Israel, in the conquest, has acted like a slothful gardener. It has not thoroughly destroyed the thorns and thistles of its fields. The consequence will be that sowing and planting and other field labors will soon be rendered painful by the presence of spiteful thorns. What will turn the Canaanites into stinging weeds and snares for Israel? The influence of habitual intercourse. Familiarity blunts aversion, smooths away contrarieties, removes differences, impairs obedience. It induces forgetfulness of what one was, what one promised, and to what conditions one is subject. Familiar intercourse with idolaters will weaken Israel's faith in the invisible God." (Lange.) V. 4. **And it came to pass, when the Angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept**, in deep alarm over their sin, with the bitter weeping of repentance. V. 5. **And they called the name of that place**, probably before Shiloh, where the people may have been assembled for one of the great festivals, **Bochim** (weepers); **and they sacrificed there unto the Lord**, sin-offerings and burnt offerings, for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness of their sins. After repentance and reconciliation comes sacrifice, also for a Christian who has so far forgotten himself as to seek the friendship of the world and has been brought to the realization of his sin.

THE CORRUPTION OF THE PEOPLE AND ITS PUNISHMENT. — V. 6. **And when Joshua had let the people go**, literally, "And Joshua sent away the people"; for here the narrative is continued from the last paragraph of the Book of Joshua, in almost the identical words, Josh. 24, 28—31, **the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.** V. 7. **And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua**, literally, "that prolonged their days after Joshua," **who had seen all the great works of the Lord that He did for Israel.** They were firm in their faith, and their example served to keep all the people on the right way. V. 8. **And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old**, Josh. 24, 29. V. 9. **And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres**, or Timnath-serah, the name Heres apparently having been borne by this whole division of the mountains of Ephraim, **in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.** V. 10. **And also all that generation**, all the contemporaries of Joshua, **were gathered unto their fathers; and there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.** They had not been witnesses of, they had not personally experienced, the miraculous revelations of divine power in giving the Land of

Promise to the children of Israel. They did not feel their indebtedness to God, they were not conscious of the fact that victory and freedom and riches came to them from the Lord. V. 11. **And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,** before His very eyes, **and served Baalim,** here said of all false gods, of the entire heathen worsip, for Baal was the chief male idol of all the Canaanitish nations. V. 12. **And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers,** the only true God, **which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them,** principally Baal and Ashtaroth, the latter being the chief female deity of the heathen nations of Canaan, **and bowed themselves unto them,** in regular systematic worship, implying a conviction of the heart, **and provoked the Lord to anger,** deeply grieved Him. V. 13. **And they forsook the Lord,** the repetition of this statement serving to emphasize the heinousness of the transgression, **and served Baal and Ashtaroth.** There was no outright rejection of Jehovah, but a mingling of His worship with the Canaanitish nature cult. But this attitude is incompatible with the true religion; for since Jehovah is the only true God, beside and before whom there are no other gods, every mingling of His worship with the adoration of idols places Him on a level with these imaginary gods. That is the essence of all syncretism and unionism, not the elevation of falsehood to the dignity of truth, but the desecration of truth to the level of falsehood. V. 14. **And the anger of the Lord was hot,** was kindled, **against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.** In abandoning the people to the resistless violence of their hostile neighbors, God took away from them the basis of their nationality and delivered them into the hands of nations that oppressed and robbed them at will. V. 15. **Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil,** in not a single undertaking were they successful, **as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them,** Lev. 26; Deut. 28; **and they were greatly distressed,** they were put into tight places, severely oppressed. V. 16. **Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them,** the purpose of this merciful manifestation being to cause them to return to the Lord in repentance and gratitude. V. 17. **And yet they would not hearken unto their judges,** namely, by desisting from idolatry which the judges tried to suppress, **but they went a-whoring after other gods,** for idolatry is spiritual adultery and immorality, **and bowed themselves unto them; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so.** Even the presence of these men who were not the regular rulers, but extraordinary authorities, appointed directly by God, failed to work a permanent reformation in the people. V. 18. **And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge,** with every single one, **and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge,** as long as he lived; **for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them,** He always had sympathy with their sorry plight and turned back to them in kindness. V. 19. **And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned,** turned back to their former manner of thinking, and acting, **and corrupted themselves more than their fathers,** became guilty of the idolatrous customs of their fathers in a still higher degree, **in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings,** literally, they did not drop their peculiar manner of acting, **nor from their stubborn way.** Such was the ever-recurring story during the period of the Judges. V. 20. **And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, Because that this people hath transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers,** namely, to clear Canaan of the heathen nations and not to become guilty of idolatry, **and have not hearkened unto My voice,** v. 21. **I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died;** for Israel was still surrounded by a circle of heathen nations living within its promised borders, to say nothing of those who with their idolatry were tolerated in the territory actually subjugated; v. 22. **that through them I may prove Israel whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.** Cp. Josh. 23, 13. Thus the divine plan of a gradual extermination of the Canaanitish nations still remaining was suspended, the punishment being intended to lead the people to repentance. V. 23. **Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered He them into the hand of Joshua.** Thus the historical and moral background of the entire book has been given in these two introductory chapters. Note: The Lord makes use of the same patience and mercy in dealing with men to-day, but when all His efforts are rejected time and again, He finally withdraws His hand in anger and delivers them to the results of their own stubbornness.

CHAPTER 3.

The Time of Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar.

THE NATIONS WHICH REMAINED. — V. 1. **Now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them,** to test their faithfulness to Him, **even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan,** the younger generation which enjoyed the fruits of conquest, but did not estimate aright the greatness of the dangers endured by the fathers, and therefore did not sufficiently value the help of God; v. 2. **only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war,** give them an idea, make them realize the great cost of the boon of freedom and material wealth which they were enjoying, **at the least such as before knew nothing thereof,** the final object being that they might learn humility and submission to the Law; v. 3. **namely, five lords of the Philistines,** those of the five city-states Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, Josh. 13, 3, **and all the Canaanites,** chiefly along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and in the Jordan Valley, **and the Sidonians,** the Phenicians, **and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon,** in the southern Anti-Lebanon, west of Damascus, **unto the entering in of Hamath,** in the valley of the Orontes. V. 4. **And they,** these heathen nations, **were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord which He commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.** By being oppressed by their enemies and thereupon delivered by the Lord through the medium of wars, Israel was both to be tested and strengthened in obedience to the Lord. V. 5. **And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites,** all of whom they permitted to live in their midst, making no serious effort to drive them out, chap. 1, 21—35. V. 6. **And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons,** thus entering into the most intimate social relationship with them, **and served their gods,** the natural consequence of breaking down the barriers which the Lord had erected by His prohibition, Ex. 34, 16. 23. 24; Deut. 7, 3. 4. That is almost invariably the progress of apostasy: friendship with the world, marriages with infidels, rejection of the Lord.

OTHNIEL JUDGE OF ISRAEL. — V. 7. **And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,** the usual formula introducing a chapter of oppression and deliverance, chap. 2, 11, **and forgat the Lord, their God, and served Baalim and the groves,** that is, Asherah, for in the heathen worship, the altar was consecrated to Baal, the pillar or tree-idol to Astarte, or Ashtaroth, chap. 2, 13. V. 8. **Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,** it was kindled, it flared up in an angry flame, **and He sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia,** some mighty monarch toward the East; **and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years,** by being obliged to pay heavy tribute money. V. 9. **And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,** as they felt the severity of the oppression more and more, **the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel,** a man who was to save them from the tyrant, **who delivered them, even Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother,** the conqueror of Debir, chap. 1, 13; Josh. 15, 16. 17. V. 10. **And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him,** filling him with extraordinary military ability and valor, as well as the wisdom necessary to decide difficult cases according to the Law, **and he judged Israel,** restored justice and order, **and went out to war; and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim,** he defeated the oppressor and threw off the burden which was bearing Israel down. Thus the consciousness of God and of the duty toward Jehovah was restored in Israel. V. 11. **And the land had rest forty years,** the people being able to follow all the pursuits of peace without outside interference. **And Othniel, the son of Kenaz,** under whose blameless and happy rule the land had been restored to its former prosperity, **died.** Thus the children of Israel had received a lesson the force of which was to be impressed upon them for all times, for every proof of God's kindness is intended to make men cling to Him in firm trust.

EHUD AND THE MOABITES. SHAMGAR. — V. 12. **And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord strengthened,** encouraged, **Eglon, the king of Moab,** the country southeast of the Dead Sea, **against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.** V 13. **And he,** Eglon, who evidently combined shrewdness with energy, **gathered unto him the children of Ammon,** to the northeast, like those of Moab, inveterate enemies of Israel, Deut. 23, 3. 4, **and Amalek,** toward the southwest, also ancient enemies of the Lord's people, Ex. 17, 10—16, **and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm-trees,** the fertile oasis in which the ruins of Jericho were located. Evidently not only the tribe of Benjamin, in whose territory the battle was fought, but all Israel, had grown careless, dull, and incapable. V. 14. **So the children of Israel served Eglon, the king of Moab, eighteen years,** by a regular payment of tribute, such as he chose to exact.

V. 15. **But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,** being roused from their lethargy once more, **the Lord raised them up a deliverer,** as before, **Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed,** literally, "unpractised, awkward, with the right hand," because the skill which other people have in their right hand he had in his left; **and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon, the king of Moab,** he being the leader or spokesman of the delegation bearing the proof of their subjection. V. 16. **But Ehud,** before setting out on this humiliating mission, **made him a dagger which had two edges,** a very effective weapon for stabbing at short range, **of a cubit length** (about twenty inches); **and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh,** out of sight and on the side from which he could immediately draw. V. 17. **And he brought the present unto Eglon, king of Moab,** who had made the oasis of Jericho his headquarters while he held the supremacy over Israel; **and Eglon was a very fat man,** extremely corpulent, even for an Oriental monarch. V. 18. **And when he,** Ehud, **had made an end to offer the present,** the audience giving him an opportunity to make the observations which he needed, **he sent away the people that bare the present,** for it was considered a mark of special respect to have a great many bearers for the tribute. V. 19. **But he himself turned again from the quarries,** or boundary-stones, **that were by Gilgal,** unto which point he had accompanied the rest of the delegation, returning to the quarters of the Moabite king, **and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king; who said, Keep silence,** thus bidding Ehud wait until the room was cleared before imparting his secret message, which Eglon naturally thought to be of value to him, especially since the return of Ehud alone seemed to indicate that he did not want his companions to know what he had to say. **And all that stood by him,** the usual attendants of the king, **went out from him,** at the king's signal indicating that he wished to be alone with the visitor. V. 20. **And Ehud came unto him,** approached nearer to him; **and he was sitting in a summer parlor,** an inner chamber, opening on an exposed balcony, his private chamber, and a cool retreat, **which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat,** probably out of respect for this word. V. 21. **And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his** (Eglon's) **belly;** v. 22. **and the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade,** holding it firmly inside the abdomen, **so that he,** Ehud, **could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out,** or, the point of the blade came out at the rear. V. 23. **Then Ehud went forth through the porch,** the open balcony, **and shut the doors of the parlor upon him, and locked them.** V. 24. **When he was gone out,** with a calmness intended to disarm every suspicion on the part of the king's attendants, **his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlor were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet** (doeth his easement) **in his summer chamber.** V. 25. **And they tarried till they were ashamed,** these words adding the notion of displeasure and ill humor; **and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlor; therefore they took a key,** another key, **and opened them,** the long silence having filled them with great uneasiness; **and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.** V. 26. **And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries,** or the boundary-stones, **and escaped unto Seirath,** in the foothills toward the northwest. V. 27. **And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim,** this trumpet-blast being transmitted among the mountains, **and the children of Israel,** with whom he had evidently agreed upon this signal, **went down with him from the mount, and he before them,** as their leader. V. 28. **And he said unto them, Follow after me; for the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man,** namely, of the Moabites, to pass over and thus to escape. The Moabite army was therefore trapped between the Jordan and the mountains, with their leader dead. V. 29. **And they slew of Moab at that time,** in the battle which followed, **about ten thousand men, all lusty,** literally, "fat," in good physical condition, **and all men of valor; and there escaped not a man,** Moab was thoroughly vanquished. V. 30. **So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.** V. 31. **And after him,** following his example in the west, **was Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad,** a primitive, but effective instrument or weapon on account of the sharp iron prick at the end; **and he also delivered Israel,** apparently from a local subjugation. In these narratives both the righteousness and the goodness of the Lord is apparent. For God punishes transgressions of every kind, often with great severity, but when the transgressors turn to Him in true repentance He is glad to send them help and salvation. It is for us to keep our Savior in mind at all times and thus to avoid all wilful sins.

CHAPTER 4.

The Victory of Deborah and Barak.

THE PROPHETESS DEBORAH CALLS BARAK. — V. 1. **And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,** literally, "they added, or continued to do, wickedness," **when Ehud was dead;** for he had kept down the spirit of idolatry and maintained a successful defensive position against all enemies. V. 2. **And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor,** evidently a very important city-state; for its king had stood at the head of a strong league of northern tribes in the time of Joshua, Josh. 11, 1. 10. 11, and the city had been rebuilt after its destruction by Israel; **the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles,** undoubtedly located in one of the valleys of Galilee, as Northern Canaan was later called. Jabin's scheme of keeping Israel in subjection by exerting pressure from two different points was apparently very successful, and the outlook seemed to favor his plan of regaining possession of the entire territory taken from his ancestors by Joshua. V. 3. **And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel,** making them feel the full weight and power of his might. V. 4. **And Deborah, a prophetess,** one possessing the prophetic gift from the Spirit of Jehovah, **the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time,** exercising the functions of the supreme court in deciding difficult cases and thus being an acknowledged leader in the nation. V. 5. **And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah,** which received its name from that fact, **between Ramah and Bethel,** in the territory of Benjamin, **in Mount Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.** Deborah was a woman of fiery spirit, as the exact translation shows; she was like a torch for Israel, kindling their languid hearts, a capable and energetic woman, but no fanatic. V. 6. **And she sent and called Barak, the son of Abinoam, out of Kedesh-naphtali,** a city in the extreme north of the later Galilee, and not far from Hazor, **and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor,** southwest of the Sea of Galilee and north of the Plain of Esdraelon, **and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?** The plan of assembling, as suggested by the Lord through the mouth of the prophetess, was that of drawing the men from the two tribes down to Tabor gradually, in small squads, the movement thus escaping the notice of the oppressors. V. 7. **And I,** the Lord further says, **will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.** It was a clear command, with a definite promise. V. 8. **And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.** Although Barak had no doubt concerning the truth of Deborah's words, he did not yet feel the divine enthusiasm for the battle, being conscious of his own inability to carry out the command of the Lord alone. V. 9. **And she said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding the journey that thou takest,** the expedition upon which he was now entering, **shall not be for thine honor,** Barak would not be hailed as the conqueror of Jabin and Sisera; **for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman,** namely, Jael, as the continuation of the story shows; for Deborah was speaking as a prophetess. **And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.** It makes no difference to the Lord whether the men and the instruments at hand are strong or weak, He is able to carry out His will as He chooses.

THE DEFEAT OF SISERA. — V. 10. **And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh,** as Deborah had suggested; **and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet,** on foot, infantry only, for they had neither chariots nor cavalry; **and Deborah went up with him.** With their number constantly growing, as new bands from the hills join them, they reach the designated place. V. 11. **Now Heber, the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses,** or brother-in-law, for the Hebrew word means simply a male relative by marriage, **had severed himself from the Kenites,** who had settled in the extreme southern part of Canaan, chap. 1, 16, **and pitched his tent,** taken up a homestead, **unto the Plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh,** in the territory of Naphtali. V. 12. **And they showed Sisera,** some one brought him the tidings, **that Barak, the son of Abinoam, was gone up to Mount Tabor,** that the Israelites were preparing to throw off the yoke of Jabin. V. 13. **And Sisera gathered together,** assembled by sending out criers, **all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon,** for the Plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, at the headwaters of the Kishon was a ground on which his army could properly deploy. V. 14. **And Deborah said unto Barak, Up! For this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?** This was a prophetic and most vivid assurance of victory. **So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thou-**

sand men after him, apparently in a sudden attack, before the terrible chariot-force had well arranged itself. V. 15. **And the Lord discomfited Sisera,** terrified him, threw him into confusion, **and all his chariots and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak,** for nothing could withstand the charge of the army of Israel, fired as it was with divine enthusiasm by Deborah, **so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot,** in a panic of terror, **and fled away on his feet,** seeking only to save his life in the general destruction. V. 16. **But Barak pursued after the chariots,** as their drivers turned in headlong flight, **and after the host,** the infantry of the enemy's army, **unto Harosheth of the Gentiles,** to the very gates of their stronghold; **and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword,** in the terrible conflict in which the sword mowed them down on every hand; **and there was not a man left.** V. 17. **Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite,** seeking refuge at the first place that seemed to promise him security; **for there was peace between Jabin, the king of Hazor, and the house of Heber, the Kenite.** Thus the mighty enemies were overthrown by the power of the Lord, for it is a small matter for Him to deliver His people with a handful of men from the hands of the mightiest tyrant.

SISERA'S DEATH. — V. 18. **And Jael went out to meet Sisera,** after the manner of Oriental hospitality, her object being to coax him into the house, **and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.** She wanted to disarm all suspicions. **And when he had turned in unto her into the tent,** probably feeling safer in the women's apartments, **she covered him with a mantle,** with a close, ruglike covering. V. 19. **And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty,** for it was a rule of hospitality that whoever had eaten or drunk anything in the tent was received into the peace of the house. **And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him,** having effectually allayed all his suspicions. V. 20. **Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.** He felt altogether secure, and lay down to sleep after giving Jael these instructions. V. 21. **And Jael, Heber's wife,** mindful of the fact that the man lying in her tent was a tyrant, a ruthless enemy of a nation with which her family was joined in the bonds of the closest relationship, **took a nail of the tent,** one of the tent-pins, **and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary,** from his long flight. **So he died.** V. 22. **And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.** Deborah's word that the Lord would sell Sisera into the hand of a woman had been literally fulfilled. V. 23. **So God subdued on that day Jabin, the king of Canaan, before the children of Israel,** by this complete defeat of his general and the entire army. V. 24. **And the hand of the children of Israel prospered,** they gained in power, **and prevailed against Jabin, the king of Canaan,** resting ever more heavily upon him, **until they had destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan.** The rule of this one king at least was definitely at an end. Note: Faith shows its power also in weak instruments, for it is the strength of God and not of men. Faith, which always keeps God's Word and promise before the eyes, is able to enter into battle at all times and to gain the victory. That is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.

CHAPTER 5.

The Song of Deborah and Barak.

THE GLORY AND POWER OF ISRAEL. — V. 1. **Then sang Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, on that day,** the song having been composed by Deborah in celebration of the great victory, **saying,** v. 2. **Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves,** literally, "for the free exhibition of warlike valor in Israel," namely, when the people with their leaders wholly devoted themselves to God and hazarded their lives in the strength of this faith, "for the willing war-service of the people, praise Jehovah." To God alone all glory and honor shall ever be given. V. 3. **Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes,** namely, all those of the heathen nations round about; **I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel,** literally, "I to Jehovah, I will sing, will play to Jehovah, the God of Israel," her song demanding all the more attention since she is a prophetess filled with the Spirit of God. After this inspiring introduction the singer reminds the hearers of some of the great deeds of God in the past. V. 4. **Lord, when Thou wentest out of Seir, when Thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,** namely, when He prepared for the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, His coming at that time being compared to the

rising of a mighty thunderstorm in the East, **in the highlands of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.** Cp. Ex. 19, 16; Hab. 3, 10. V. 5. **The mountains melted from before the Lord,** flowed away, as it were, by reason of mighty earthquakes, **even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel,** for it was there that the disturbance was concentrated. Ps. 97, 5. After this rehearsal of God's wonderful majesty, Deborah pictures the distress of Israel before the victory just gained. V. 6. **In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath,** who proved himself a hero in a local attack on the Philistines, chap. 3, 31, **in the days of Jael,** even though this heroic woman was then already living, yet Israel as a whole was in a miserable plight, **the highways were unoccupied,** the people of Israel had ceased to use them for fear of their enemies, **and the travelers walked through byways,** made use of hidden paths, often with crooked and zigzag courses, in order to escape the vigilance of their enemies. V. 7. **The inhabitants of the villages ceased,** the open, unfortified hamlets were deserted for fear of marauding bands, **they ceased in Israel, until that I, Deborah, arose, that I arose a mother in Israel,** to nurse and protect the people with motherly care. V. 8. **They,** the people of Israel, **chose new gods,** the cause of their downfall, the reason for their misery; **then was war in the gates,** as a result of their having forsaken the old, the everlasting God, Deut. 32, 17. **Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?** There were no warriors left to protect the country against the fury of the enemies. V. 9. **My heart is toward the governors of Israel,** she was with them heart and soul, she inspired them with hope and trust in Jehovah, **that offered themselves willingly among the people,** devoting themselves to the cause of conquering the Lord's enemies. **Bless ye the Lord.** V. 10. **Speak, ye that ride on white asses,** the nobles of the people should meditate upon the deeds of the Lord, **ye that sit in judgment,** on splendid rugs or mats such as were used on saddles, **and walk by the way,** for the simple wayfarers, the poor and lowly among the people, were also included in this admonition. V. 11. **They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of His villages in Israel; then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.** This is a picture of peace times. Instead of the noise and shouting of those contending at the cisterns, anxious to get away before some band of the enemies might come along, they could now take their time and sound forth songs of praise to Jehovah for His deeds of righteousness, also in restoring freedom to the inhabitants of the open hamlets, for the people could now return without fear to the gates of their towns and cities, since the power of the oppressor was broken. V. 12. **Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song;** there was need of her singing her most inspiring song in imparting enthusiasm to the soldiers whom she had bidden Barak assemble. **Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive;** for by fighting and leading the enemy captive he would end the conflict, **thou son of Abinoam.** V. 13. **Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people; the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty,** literally, "Then went down a remnant of the powerful, the people; Jehovah went down for me among the mighty." It was indeed only a small remnant of the powerful, a fraction of mighty Israel that went forth to battle with the tyrant, but the Lord was in their midst at the call of Deborah, and therefore they could freely risk the conflict. V. 14. **Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek;** for to this tribe belonged Joshua, the hero against the Amalekites, Ex. 17. **After thee, Benjamin, among thy people;** for it was Ehud of this tribe who had rendered Benjamin illustrious. **Out of Machir came down governors,** men who had proved themselves able leaders of the people, also in this campaign, **and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer,** or, "the staff of him who musters well," men distinguished for leadership. V. 15. **And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,** although they brought no troops, their presence proved their interest in the campaign; **even Issachar, and also Barak; he was sent on foot into the valley,** he had only infantry under his command, but he made his furious, overwhelming attack nevertheless. **For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart;** the tribe of Reuben, in its habitations along its brooks in the east country, reflected so long upon the necessity and the possibility of joining the army of Barak until it was too late. V. 16. **Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings of the flocks?** Because the Reubenites preferred the security of their homes, they are here addressed with bitter irony. **For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart;** they meditated and considered the matter well enough, but they were unable to arouse themselves to action. V. 17. **Gilead abode beyond Jordan,** both the tribes of Reuben and Gad seemed to consider their living east of Jordan sufficient excuse for not joining their brethren; **and why did Dan,** whose territory was so near, **remain in ships?** letting his own commercial interests take preference over the needs of his brethren. **Asher continued on the seashore,** dwelling securely in his harbors, **and abode in his breaches,** in the small bays on which the harbors were located. V. 18. **Zebu-**

lun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. The men of Zebulun willingly offered their souls, their lives, for the liberation of their country, and those of Naphtali on the heights of their mountainous territory. Their praise, therefore, is sung in this hymn. The soldiers of the Lord who freely set forth to battle with the enemies of Christ, with the weapons of the Spirit, are to be commended, but those who remain idle while their brethren are engaged in campaigns which threaten the very existence of the Church, deserve to be severely reprimanded.

THE DEFEAT AND DEATH OF SISERA. — V. 19. **The kings came and fought,** said figuratively of the leaders of Jabin's army; **then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,** for the two cities are barely three miles apart, and the plain is watered by several small tributaries of the Kishon. **They took no gain of money,** they did not get so much as one piece of silver as booty nor one ounce of money to buy them off. V. 20. **They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,** literally, "From heaven fought the stars, from their courses they fought against Sisera"; by an extraordinary phenomenon the Lord sent confusion into the ranks of the enemy. V. 21. **The river of Kishon swept them away,** snatched them away, as they attempted to cross it in their headlong flight, **that ancient river, the river Kishon;** the very brook was an instrument of help against the foe. **O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength,** or, "Step forth with strength," as Deborah urges herself onward in singing of the mighty defeat. V. 22. **Then were the horse-hoofs broken by the means of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones,** or, "Then stamped the hoofs of the horses from the rushing, the rushing of his champions," as the foes, panic-stricken before Israel, dashed away in furious flight. V. 23. **Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.** When they could have been of assistance to the army of Barak, in destroying the fleeing foes, they refused to help. V. 24. **Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent.** People of Meroz, members of the nation of Israel, refused to help, but Jael, though only a woman, though a mere dweller in tents and not of the descendants of Jacob, made use of the opportunity offered her. V. 25. **He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter,** the very thickest, the most excellent cream, **in a lordly dish,** in a show-bowl, the finest vessel in the tent. V. 26. **She put her hand to the nail,** the tent-pin, **and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.** The very fierce and vivid description may be rendered: She swung it upon Sisera, she pierces his head, and she crashes and pounds through his temples. V. 27. **At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead.** So the smitten chieftain drew himself together after the first blow was struck, sought to rise, and fell back. Twice more he writhed convulsively and then died. And now the last scene is pictured. V. 28. **The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice,** full of uneasiness and impatience over the delay of her son, otherwise so quick in returning with rich booty, **Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?** If he himself is delayed, why does he not at least send word of the success of his enterprise? V. 29. **Her wise ladies answered her,** with the wisdom of pride that cannot conceive of a defeat for Sisera; **yea, she returned answer to herself,** v. 30. **Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey,** thereby being detained so long; **to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colors,** beautiful colored or purple robes, **a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil,** color-embroidered vestments, two for his neck as booty? "The glowing heat of her prophetic enthusiasm shines through the irony with which she places the vain pride of unbelieving enemies over against the almighty power of God. It is not an irony of hatred, disfiguring the face with scornful smiles, but such as springs from the consciousness that God's wisdom and power are superior to all heroes and heathen." (Lange.) V. 31. **So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord,** fallen and brought to naught like Sisera; **but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.** The rising of the sun in his full strength is a fitting picture of the rising of Israel to an ever more glorious manifestation of power, according to the intention of the Lord. **And the land had rest forty years.**

CHAPTER 6.

The Call of Gideon.

THE OPPRESSION OF MIDIAN. — V. 1. **And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,** after the forty years of rest; **and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.** The Midianites, descendants of Abraham and Keturah, occupied the rich steppes east of the territory of Moab and Ammon. After their decisive defeat at the hands of the children of Israel at the time of Moses, Num. 31, they had again grown numerous enough to give vent to their ancient hatred for the people of God. V. 2. **And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel,** rested heavily upon the people; **and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains and caves and strongholds.** They made use of the natural grottoes and caves in the limestone, excavated others, made them habitable by digging air-holes from above, and fortified many, to serve not only for retreats in case of a raid, but also as places for the safe-keeping of their personal property. V. 3. **And so it was, when Israel had sown,** prepared the fields for harvest, **that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites,** the other tribe which was especially hostile to Israel, **and the children of the East,** desert tribes living by plunder and pillage, **even they came up against them;** v. 4. **and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth,** by wantonly plundering and devastating the harvest-fields, **till thou come unto Gaza,** the raids thus extending across the entire land, to the Philistine country, **and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.** V. 5. **For they,** the Midianites and their allies, **came up with their cattle and their tents,** fully supplied with all they needed; **and they came as grasshoppers,** locusts, **for multitude,** and also for voracity; **for both they and their camels were without number,** a very great multitude; **and they entered into the land to destroy it,** that was their avowed purpose, wantonly and ruthlessly to devastate the entire land, making it unfit for habitation. V. 6. **And Israel was greatly impoverished,** brought down very low, deeply distressed, **because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,** they turned to Him in repentance. V. 7. **And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites,** v. 8. **that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel,** a man directly inspired by Him, **which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage,** namely, as a people, Ex. 13, 3. 14; 20, 2; v. 9. **and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you,** the nations of Canaan as they were defeated by Moses and Joshua, **and gave you their land;** v. 10. **and I said unto you, I am the Lord, your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites,** the name here standing for the Canaanitish nations in general, **in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not obeyed My voice.** That was the explanation of their present plight. God does not suffer disobedience in His children to go unpunished. But in sending such punishment, His intention is to draw His children back to Him in true sorrow over their sins, that they plead for mercy and forgiveness.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARS TO GIDEON. V. 11. **And there came an Angel of the Lord,** the Angel in the extraordinary sense of the term, the Son of God, **and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash, the Abiezrite,** in the territory of Manasseh, apparently in the northwestern part of the plain, not far from the territories of Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulun; **and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress,** the place where the grapes were pressed out, not an exposed threshing-floor, **to hide it from the Midianites,** bands of whose raiders might be expected at any time. V. 12. **And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him,** Gideon, **and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.** The reference was not only to his physical strength, but to the determination and energy which was apparent in his entire appearance. V. 13. **And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord,** for he realized that this man was not a common man, **if the Lord be with us, why, then, is all this befallen us?** Cp. Deut. 31, 17. **And where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?** These words did not arise from doubt and unbelief, but from a deep feeling of Israel's dishonor. **But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.** It was the only conclusion which Gideon found possible. V. 14. **And the Lord looked upon him,** for He it was that appeared in the form of the Angel, and said, **Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee,** or, Do not I send thee? V. 15. **And he said unto Him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?** acknowledging the speaker as the Lord God. **Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh,** my division of a thousand families is the lowliest in the tribe, **and I am the least in my father's house,** he occupied no position of influence and authority. V. 16. **And the Lord said unto him,** in taking away this

objection, **Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man**; their entire host would fall before him as though it consisted of but a single man. V. 17. **And he**, Gideon, **said unto Him, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, then show me a sign that Thou talkest with me**, literally, "whether thou art He who speaks with me," whether He had this divine authority thus to send him, in other words, whether He were God. V. 18. **Depart not hence, I pray Thee, until I come unto Thee and bring forth my present**, a sacrificial gift offered to God, from whose acceptance he would obtain evidence of the deity of the messenger. **And He said, I will tarry until thou come again.** V. 19. **And Gideon went in and made ready a kid**, preparing it for food, **and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour** (almost twenty-six quarts). **The flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak and presented it**, set it down before his Visitor. V. 20. **And the Angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock**, which He pointed out to him, **and pour out the broth**, namely, over the food. **And he did so.** V. 21. **Then the Angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight**, disappearing as suddenly as He had come. V. 22. **And when Gideon perceived that He was an Angel of the Lord**, the Lord Himself, as He had revealed Himself to Abraham and to Joshua, **Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God!** an expression of dismay and of the fear of death, since he, a sinful human being, had spoken with Jehovah, **for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face!** V. 23. **And the Lord said unto him**, no longer in visible form, but by the voice of the unseen God, **Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die.** V. 24. **Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom** ("The Lord is peace"); **unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.** This altar was not to serve for sacrifices, but as a memorial and witness of the theophany vouchsafed to Gideon, and of his expression that Jehovah did not desire to destroy Israel in His wrath, but had only thoughts of peace toward the people. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has given us thousands of proofs that He is all-powerful, but also gracious and merciful. Therefore we should trust in His power and grace.

GIDEON GRANTED SPECIAL SIGNS. — V. 25. **And it came to pass the same night**, following this wonderful manifestation, **that the Lord said unto him, Gideon, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath**, for thus openly was idolatry practised in Israel, **and cut down the grove**, the Ashera pillar **that is by it**, the chief deities of the Canaanites being worshiped by the family of Abiezer; v. 26. **and build an altar unto the Lord, thy God, upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place**, on the grotto or fortification, the wood from the pillar of Ashera being intended to consume the burnt offering of Gideon, **and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.** V. 27. **Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had said unto him; and so it was, because he feared his father's household**, addicted to idolatry as they were, **and the men of the city that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.** V. 28. **And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove**, the wooden pillar erected in honor of Ashera, **was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built**, for it was not yet fully consumed by the fire. V. 29. **And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked**, searching for the man who might be guilty, **they said**, either the searchers themselves upon strong suspicion, or men who knew of Gideon's exploit, **Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing.** V. 30. **Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son that he may die, because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove**, the wooden pillar, **that was by it.** V. 31. **And Joash said unto all that stood against him**, for he fully approved of the act of his son, **Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him?** The emphasis in either case is on the "ye," since Joash wanted to ridicule the idea of Baal's having need of men to defend him, if he were in truth god. **He that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning; if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.** He demanded that his enraged townspeople wait till the morning, in order to give Baal time to avenge himself if he were able. Joash knew, and the people knew, that this settled the matter, for none of them seriously believed in the idol. It is one of the characteristic illusions of heathenism in all ages that it itself does not believe in that for which it appears to be so zealous. V. 32. **Therefore on that day he**, Joash, **called him**, Gideon, **Jerubbaal** ("Let Baal plead his case"), **saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.** This brought the incident

to a close. V. 33. **Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East, all the enemy allies, were gathered together, and went over,** passed over Jordan from the east, **and pitched in the Valley of Jezreel,** in the upper reaches of the Kishon. V. 34. **But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon,** clothing him like a garment or a coat of mail, **and he blew a trumpet,** to summon Israel against their enemies; **and Abiezer,** his own section of the tribe of Manasseh, **was gathered after him.** V. 35. **And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also was gathered after him; and he sent messengers unto Asher,** who had held back from Barak, **and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.** V. 36. **And Gideon said unto God,** in asking a further confirmation of the success of his undertaking, **If Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said,** v. 37. **behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor,** out in the open on the ground; **and if the dew be on the fleece only, and if it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said.** He had such a humble opinion of himself and his influence that he felt the need of such a sign to establish his courage. V. 38. **And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water,** while the ground round about was dry. V. 39. **And Gideon said unto God, Let not Thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once,** requiring one more sign, in which all explanations on natural principles would be excluded; **let me prove, I pray Thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece,** which has a tendency to absorb the slightest moisture, **and upon all the ground let there be dew.** V. 40. **And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground,** as Gideon had asked. His request did not flow from unbelief, but from the weakness of his flesh, which causes even the servants of God to be anxious for the future. But God is rich in kindness; He has compassion with our weakness, and comes to our assistance even with extraordinary blessings and miraculous manifestations.

CHAPTER 7.

The Overthrow of the Midianites.

THE ARMY REDUCED. — V. 1. **Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod,** in the southwestern foothills above the plain, **so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley,** where their outposts commanded a free view of the valley. V. 2. **And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands** (there were about 32,000 soldiers of Israel against 135,000 of the enemy), **lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.** This danger the Lord wanted to remove by a radical measure. V. 3. **Now, therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead,** Deut. 20, 8. The name Gilead was not confined to the country east of Jordan, but was also applied to a region between Ephraim and Manasseh. The tremblers were dismissed from this place, for they would only have been a hindrance in battle. **And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.** V. 4. **And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many,** and there was still danger of their vaunting themselves in case of a victory; **bring them down unto the water, and I will try them, put them to a test, for thee there; and it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.** The entire region is well watered, there being no lack of brooks. V. 5. **So he brought down the people unto the water; and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue,** not taking the time to kneel down, but quickly scooping up some water with the hollow hand and drinking from its cuplike curve, **as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself,** in one division; **likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.** They were here under no constraint of any kind, and would show their natural characteristics very plainly. V. 6. **And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men,** such as showed their natural readiness, their alertness, disregarded their comfort; **but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water,** preferring to be comfortable rather than keenly watchful. V. 7. **And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped,** sipping the water from their cupped hands, **will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand, the ratio being one to four hundred**

and fifty; and let all the other people go every man unto his place, return home. V. 8. So the people took victuals in their hand, rather, they, the three hundred, took the people's food, which had been prepared for the campaign, and their trumpets; and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, back to his own dwelling, and retained those three hundred men. And the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. Gideon had only one advantage, that of location; every other consideration was against him. God has His own ways of ruling the world and of waging His wars, and the believers must simply learn to trust in Him.

THE DEFEAT OF THE MIDIANITES. — V. 9. And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him, Gideon, Arise, get thee down unto the host, in a sudden night attack upon the enemy; for I have delivered it into thine hand. V. 10. But if thou fear to go down, to make the attack at once, go thou with Phurah, thy servant, down to the host, on a scouting expedition; v. 11. and thou shalt hear what they say, find out the state, disposition, and attitude of the enemy; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host, the information obtained on the first expedition would give him the courage to proceed with his night attack at once. Then went he down with Phurah, his servant, unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host, he proceeded to the very line of the vanguard of the camp, right among the outposts. V. 12. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the East lay along in the valley, in their camp, like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seaside for multitude; countless numbers and vast resources against the handful of Gideon's men. V. 13. And when Gideon was come, as he crept up as near as he dared, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, rolling down from the mountains, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along, upside down. The meaning is obvious, namely, this, that the oppressed and despised Israelites, the eaters of barley-bread, had descended from the mountains, the tent of the dream standing collectively for the entire encampment. V. 14. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host. Thus the Lord, through this dream and its correct interpretation, filled the hearts of the enemy with fear, while He strengthened His servant for the task awaiting him. V. 15. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and the interpretation thereof, which showed him the mood, the condition of mind of the enemies, that he worshiped, thanking God for this encouragement, and returned into the host of Israel and said, Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. Being assured of this fact, he was eager to make the charge. V. 16. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, of a hundred men each, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, earthen vessels, and lamps, torches, within the pitchers, where they were concealed until needed. V. 17. And he said unto them, Look on me and do likewise; and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. V. 18. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and say, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon, for that was the battle-cry. By attacking the camp of the Midianites from three sides at once and sounding with all possible noise, the enemy would be deceived concerning the size of the army of Israel and thrown into confusion. V. 19. So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, just about midnight, the time of the soundest sleep; and they had but newly set the watch, the sentinels having just been changed; and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands, at the same time holding aloft the flaming torches. V. 20. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal; and they cried, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. V. 21. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, without advancing to a hand-to-hand encounter; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled; for they were seized with the alarm of panic when without warning the trumpets sounded, the pitchers crashed, the thundering battle-cry broke out. "It tells the Midianites that the sword of the God, whose people and faith they have oppressed, and of the man whose insignificance they have despised, whose family they have injured, and who through God becomes their conqueror, is about to be swung over their heads." (Lange.) V. 22. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword among the host of the enemies, against his fellow even throughout all the host, as a result of their headless panic; and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, toward Zererah, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath, in three different scattered columns toward the

southeast, all in the attempt to reach the fords of the Jordan. V. 23. **And the men of Israel,** the enemy thus being engaged in headless flight, **gathered themselves together out of Naphtali and out of Asher and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.** V. 24. **And Gideon,** in the hope of cutting off the fleeing Midianites before they reached the safety of their own country, **sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan,** the purpose being to hold all the fords as far south as Beth-barah, and thus, if possible, to prevent the enemy even from reaching the Jordan in its lower passages. **Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.** V. 25. **And they,** the Ephraimites, **took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb** (raven and wolf); **and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb,** both of these places receiving their names from these events, **and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan,** where he had gone in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. Note: Much greater than the victory of Gideon is that of Christ, who delivered us from the oppression of Satan, not with swords and the power of earthly weapons, but by His almighty strength, and who makes known this victory in the Gospel, by which we become partakers of the redemption gained through His blood.

CHAPTER 8.

The End of the Campaign against Midian.

DIFFICULTIES WITH EPHRAIM AND THE CITIES SUCCOTH AND PENUEL. — V. 1. **And the men of Ephraim,** who had not been included in the order to mobilize their forces, chap. 6, 35, **said unto him,** Gideon, **Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?** They demanded an explanation for having been slighted by Gideon, as they supposed. **And they did chide with him sharply,** attacked him in a vehement quarrel. V. 2. **And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison with you?** It was a diplomatic retort, for it placed the exploit of the Ephraimites in capturing the princes Oreb and Zeeb above the defeat of the entire army by Gideon's band. **Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?** They had, indeed, had the gleaning of the battle, but this achievement, as Gideon intimates, is to be valued more highly than the victory of the three hundred men whom he called according to the name of his family, Abiezer. V. 3. **God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what was I able to do in comparison of you?** As a real hero Gideon was truly humble and thereby, above all, gained his object, that of keeping peace in Israel. **Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.** They were appeased, their pride and vanity was satisfied, but their jealousy was afterward rebuked most sharply by the deeds of Gideon. V. 4. **And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.** Their pursuit of the enemy had rendered them weak and faint, yet they continued on their way in order to complete the overthrow of the oppressors. V. 5. **And he said unto the men of Succoth,** near which city, not far from the mouth of the Jabbok, he had forded the Jordan, **Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint,** chiefly from hunger, for they had exhausted their small stock of provisions, **and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.** He and his band were risking their lives for all Israel, including the men of Gad, whom he was here addressing, and therefore his request was by no means unreasonable. V. 6. **And the princes,** the rulers or magistrates, **of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand that we should give bread unto thine army?** Since bread costs money, their covetous hearts referred to the small band of Gideon as a host, and their sneering reference to the fists or arms of the Midianitish kings implied that they first wanted to see the enemy bound before them. Here was utter lack of charity combined with cowardice and even treason. V. 7. **And Gideon said, Therefore, when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers,** using these as threshing-flails on their backs. V. 8. **And he went up thence to Penuel,** a city some ten miles up the Jabbok, on its north bank, **and spake unto them likewise; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him,** with the same exhibition of selfishness. V. 9. **And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower,** the strongest part of the city's fortification, upon which they relied. Lack of courage and selfishness are the chief dangers threatening the Church of Christ from within, for they make men unwilling to fight and sacrifice for the Lord.

The End of Zebah and Zalmunna. — V. 10. **Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor,** near the headwaters of the Jabbok, **and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the East; for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword,** namely, in the battle in the Plain of Jezreel and in the pursuit. V. 11. **And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah,** the easternmost cities of Gad, **and smote the host,** attacking, apparently, from the northeast, from which direction the enemy did not expect an assault; **for the host was secure.** V. 12. **And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host;** terror seized upon them, so that they offered no resistance, and the army surrendered. V. 13. **And Gideon, the son of Joash, returned from battle before the sun was up,** or, from the ascent or pass of Hecheres, in the hills east of Succoth, v. 14. **and caught a young man of the men,** the inhabitants, **of Succoth, and enquired of him,** in order to find out certain facts about the city; **and he described unto him the princes of Succoth and the elders thereof,** wrote down their names for Gideon, **even threescore and seventeen men.** V. 15. **And he, Gideon, came unto the men of Succoth and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna,** whom he led along with him captive, **with whom ye did upbraid me,** concerning whom they had spoken to him in a jeering manner, **saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?** V. 16. **And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth,** by giving them a well-deserved flogging he taught all the inhabitants of the city a lesson, especially concerning the penalties of treasonable selfishness. V. 17. **And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city,** in a just punishment of their faithlessness and treason. V. 18. **Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna,** after his return to his own tribe, **What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?** He wanted a description of their face and form, their general appearance. **And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king.** This was in reference to a raid which had been made by the Midianites before Gideon had been called to enter upon this campaign of vengeance. V. 19. **And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother,** the very nearest blood-relatives. **As the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you,** he would have been inclined to spare their lives, but this one cruel action made it impossible for him to do so. V. 20. **And he said unto Jether, his first-born,** apparently still a lad, **Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth,** not yet accustomed to slaying men. V. 21. **Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength;** their execution was a task, not for a weak lad, but for a full-grown man. **And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments,** little moon-shaped pendants, **that were on their camels' necks.** In this way was the just punishment of God upon the oppressors put into execution.

The Consequences of the Campaign. — V. 22. **Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also,** they wanted to establish a hereditary kingdom with their great deliverer at their head, as the founder of a royal dynasty; **for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.** V. 23. **And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.** Gideon did not feel himself called upon to found a royal dynasty in Israel, but considered the direct government of the Lord (theocracy) sufficient for the needs of the people. V. 24. **And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey,** the various rings, especially those worn in the nose and in the ears, which the soldiers of Israel had taken from the captives and slain in the recent battle. (**For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.**) The enemies, members of nomad tribes as they were, had possessed a wealth of gold in the form of ornaments. V. 25. **And they answered, We will willingly give them,** they were very glad to comply with his request. **And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey,** whatever booty he had gained in the form of gold ornaments and other precious possessions. V. 26. **And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold** (more than $16,000 worth); **beside ornaments, and collars, ear-pendants made of pearls and precious stones, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks,** made up of moon-shaped pendants. V. 27. **And Gideon made an ephod thereof,** a copy of that worn by the high priest at Shiloh, Ex. 28, **and put it in his city, even in Ophrah,** intending it as an act of worship to God, in accordance with his declaration that Jehovah alone was to be

honored; and all Israel went thither, instead of to Shiloh, **a-whoring after it,** committing idolatry with the ephod of Gideon, perverting even faith into superstition; **which thing became a snare unto Gideon and to his house,** for he set aside the Aaronic priesthood and lowered the respect in which it was held by the people. V. 28. **Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more;** they were effectually overthrown. **And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon,** for his powerful influence kept the enemies in fear and the people from idolatry. V. 29. **And Jerubbaal, the son of Joash, went and dwelt in his own house,** retired to the outward position of a private person. V. 30. **And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten;** for he had many wives. He had everything that made for fame and happiness in Israel, power and influence, peace, riches, and many sons. V. 31. **And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called,** or, "and called his name," **Abimelech** ("My father is king"). It seems that this concubine from the beginning had great plans for the son of Gideon and taught him a false ambition from the start. V. 32. **And Gideon, the son of Joash, died in a good old age,** untroubled by even the shadow of events which transpired after his death, **and was buried in the sepulcher of Joash, his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites,** a king in the estimation of the grateful Israelites, if not in deed. V. 33. **And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a-whoring after Baalim,** in all the idolatry of the Canaanites, **and made Baal-berith their god,** considering him as one with whom they had made a covenant. V. 34. **And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord, their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side;** v. 35. **neither showed they kindness to the house,** the children, the family, **of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel.** They deliberately set out to forget everything that might have reminded them of repentance. Unbelief and ingratitude go hand in hand, for the heart of men is unreliable. Even great benefactors, through whom the Lord brings blessings upon His people, are soon forgotten.

CHAPTER 9.

The Reign of Abimelech.

ABIMELECH BECOMES KING. — V. 1. **And Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal,** by his concubine, chap. 8, 31, **went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren,** all her nearest relatives, **and communed with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,** v. 2. **Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you?** He presumes that the position of judge in Israel is hereditary, and craftily suggests that it would be of advantage to have only one man in that office rather than many. **Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh,** for he, through his mother, was a blood-relative of the citizens of Shechem. These two points he wanted them to consider carefully. V. 3. **And his mother's brethren,** acting upon the suggestion of Abimelech, **spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words; and their hearts,** those of all the Shechemites, **inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother.** They permitted themselves to be led astray by his perversion of the facts. V. 4. **And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver** (barely $45) **out of the house of Baal-berith,** for as idolaters they were opposed to Jerubbaal and his family, who had abolished idolatry wherever his influence extended, **wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons,** a body-guard from the idle rabble, the town-bums, easily enough converted into thugs, **which followed him.** V. 5. **And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone,** dragging them forth for a formal slaughter; **notwithstanding yet Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, was left; for he hid himself.** V. 6. **And all the men of Shechem,** after this bloody deed, **gathered together, and all the house of Millo,** the name of the fort or citadel of Shechem, **and went and made Abimelech king by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem,** at the great stone, set up by Joshua under the oak, Josh. 24, 25. 26. Thus the followers of Baal, thugs and murderers, had triumphed over the followers of the true God. It is always a heavy chastisement in both Church and State if the enemies of the Lord obtain the power.

THE PARABLE OF JOTHAM. — V. 7. **And when they told it,** the entire story concerning the election of Abimelech, **to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim,** overlooking Shechem from the south, **and lifted up his voice, and cried and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you,**

a summons after the manner of the prophets. Now follows his parable. V. 8. **The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them,** no special reason being given for this desire; **and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us.** V. 9. **But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man,** have I lost my oil, have I become worthless, **and go to be promoted over the trees,** waving back and forth in an uncertain rule, an honor which may be taken from him at any time, by the fickleness of the subjects? V. 10. **And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou and reign over us.** V. 11. **But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?** V. 12. **Then said the trees unto the vine,** a symbol of government, as that which gives peace and comfort, **Come thou and reign over us.** V. 13. **And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man,** a proverbial saying signifying that wine cheers all persons, even the highest and noblest, **and go to be promoted over the trees?** So all these trees rightly considered their calling of bearing precious fruits for the use of mankind of more importance than the uncertain honor of an elective kingship. V. 14. **Then said all the trees unto the bramble,** the thorn-bush, **Come thou and reign over us.** V. 15. **And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth,** a fact which she could as yet hardly believe, **ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow,** words which contain a cutting irony, as the Shechemites soon found out to their sorrow; **and if not, let fire come out of the bramble,** the despised and dangerous weed, also on account of its combustibility, **and devour the cedars of Lebanon,** the noblest trees in the country. Jotham now himself makes the application of his parable. V. 16. **Now, therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely in that ye have made Abimelech,** that dangerous thorn-bush, **king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal,** who refused royal honors in Israel, **and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands,** if it was such treatment which they had really deserved at the hands of the Shechemites or of all Israel; v. 17. **(for my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian;** v. 18. **and ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant,** for that was the actual position of Gideon's concubine, the mother of Abimelech, **king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother;)** all these facts having been duly considered by them, v. 19. **if ye, then, have dealt truly and sincerely,** in faithfulness and uprightness, **with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you,** an expression of bitter scorn over their murderous faithlessness; v. 20. **but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house,** the inhabitants, **of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.** So both the sinful trees and their tyrannical king were destined to be consumed. V. 21. **And Jotham ran away,** before the men of the city could recover from their surprise, **and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech, his brother,** for Abimelech was a tyrant and might put him to death, if he caught him. The government of tyrants and godless persons always brings misfortune upon a people and especially upon the Church.

THE DEFEAT OF GAAL. — V. 22. **When Abimelech had reigned, held sway, three years over Israel,** over as many of the people as acknowledged his rule, v. 23. **then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem,** sowing the seeds of discord and treason between them; **and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,** they rebelled against him; v. 24. **that the cruelty,** the violence, **done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid, upon Abimelech, their brother, which slew them, and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in the killing of his brethren.** The vengeance of God was to strike both the tyrant and those who had strengthened him in his wicked plans, as both were equally guilty. V. 25. **And the men of Shechem set liers-in-wait for him in the top of the mountains,** men in ambush for the purpose of bringing discredit upon Abimelech, who evidently did not live in Shechem, **and they robbed all that came along that way by them,** thus making it appear either that he was not able to keep the criminals at bay, or that they were operating with his consent, that he himself was a robber and a highwayman; **and it was told Abimelech,** his eyes thus being opened to the real state of affairs. V. 26. **And Gaal, the son of Ebed, came with his brethren,** apparently the leader of a roving band, **and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him,** believing him to be the very man for their purpose, namely, to lead the rebellion against Abimelech. V. 27. **And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes, and made merry,** arranged a great banquet or sacrificial meal, **and went into the house of their god,** Baal-berith, **and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech.** V. 28. **And Gaal, the son of Ebed,** apparently a true adventurer, **said, Who is Abimelech,** and who

is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is not he the son of Jerubbaal, the enemy and destroyer of their god? **and Zebul his officer?** The ruler or prefect of the city was Abimelech's representative, according to Gaal's idea, the tyrant's tool. **Serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem,** the original heathen owners of the city; **for why should we serve him?** V. 29. **And would to God this people were under my hand! Then would I remove Abimelech.** His drunken boast was that if he but had as much authority as Zebul, he would soon disclaim allegiance to the tyrant and put him out of the way. **And he said to Abimelech,** a boastful challenge, as though the latter had been present in person, **Increase thine army and come out,** namely, to make war upon rebellious Shechem. V. 30. **And when Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal, the son of Ebed,** when they were brought to his attention, **his anger was kindled.** V. 31. **And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily,** or, to Tormah, **saying, Behold, Gaal, the son of Ebed, and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee.** V. 32. **Now, therefore, up by night, thou and the people that is with thee,** for Abimelech evidently was in the midst of his army, on some expedition, **and lie in wait in the field,** remain in ambush till the morning; v. 33. **and it shall be that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city,** move upon it to give battle; **and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.** V. 34. **And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night,** following the plan outlined by Zebul, **and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies.** V. 35. **And Gaal, the son of Ebed, went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city,** for he considered himself the ruler of the town; **and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from lying in wait,** making ready for the attack on the city. V. 36. **And when Gaal saw the people,** the approaching forces, **he said to Zebul,** whose position as prefect made his presence in the gate necessary, **Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains,** the higher hills in the distance. **And Zebul,** in order to deceive him and to prevent his gathering a full force for the defense of the city, **said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.** V. 37. **And Gaal spake again and said, See, there come people down by the middle of the land,** over the hills in the middle distance, **and another company come along by the Plain of Meonenim,** the Magicians' Grove, a dark woods against the near horizon. There could no longer be any doubt that an attacking force was moving upon the city. V. 38. **Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out, I pray now, and fight with them.** Here was a chance to make good his boasting, if he were really such a great hero. V. 39. **And Gaal,** goaded on by this biting remark of Zebul, **went out before the men of Shechem,** in the presence of the heathen nobility of the city, **and fought with Abimelech.** V. 40. **And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him,** escaping both death and capture, **and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate.** V. 41. **And Abimelech,** instead of following up his advantage that day, **dwelt at Arumah,** went into camp at this small town near by; **and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem,** he once more became a rover. V. 42. **And it came to pass on the morrow that the people went out into the field,** pursuing their work in the fields and vineyards with the idea that Abimelech was satisfied with the banishment of Gaal; **and they,** scouts or sentinels, **told Abimelech.** V. 43. **And he took the people, his army, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them,** in the manner which is now explained. V. 44. **And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward,** in a sudden charge, **and stood in the entering of the gate of the city,** thus cutting off the retreat of the men in the fields; **and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them.** V. 45. **And Abimelech,** having held the gate until his forces had finished their gruesome work outside, **fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city,** leveling it to the ground, **and sowed it with salt,** to signify that the city was to remain a desert of salt forever (but it was afterward rebuilt, 1 Kings 12, 25).

THE END OF ABIMELECH. — V. 46. **And when all the men of the tower of Shechem,** probably the same as Beth-Millo, the fortress of the city, **heard that, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith,** thinking they would be safe in the sanctuary. V. 47. **And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.** V. 48. **And Abimelech gat him up to Mount Zalmon,** so called from its wooded heights, **he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder,** all this being told with the details noted by an eye-witness,

and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done. V. 49. **And all the people,** in obedience to his command, **likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold,** which the men of the tower had considered a refuge, **and set the hold on fire upon them, so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also,** about a thousand men and women, suffocated by the smoke and consumed by the flames. V. 50. **Then went Abimelech to Thebez,** evidently not far from Shechem, **and encamped against Thebez, and took it,** the city proper. V. 51. **But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women and all they of the city, and shut it to them,** locked and barred it securely, **and gat them up to the top of the tower.** V. 52. **And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire,** thereby stepping closely to the wall. V. 53. **And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone,** the upper stone, known as the runner, **upon Abimelech's head, and all to** (wholly) **brake his skull,** crushing its bones. V. 54. **And he called hastily unto the young man, his armor-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him.** Thus he was fierce and warlike to the end, determined not to have appearances against him. **And his young man thrust him through, and he died.** V. 55. **And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.** The siege was raised and the dead chieftain forsaken. V. 56. **Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father in slaying his seventy brethren;** v. 57. **and all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal.** God often pursues that course, punishing wicked people by wicked people, overthrowing rebels by rebels. His avenging hand finds both the seducers and the seduced.

CHAPTER 10.

Israel's Further Apostasy and Punishment.

THE JUDGESHIP OF TOLA AND JAIR. — V. 1. **And after Abimelech there arose to defend,** that is, to save, to deliver, **Israel Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim,** in its northern ranges. V. 2. **And he judged Israel twenty and three years,** his work consisting chiefly in deciding difficult cases and in opposing every tendency of the people toward idolatry, whereby he also saved them from oppression by hostile nations; **and died, and was buried in Shamir.** V. 3. **And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite,** a man whose home was in Gilead, on the east side of Jordan, **and judged Israel twenty and two years.** V. 4. **And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair,** the villages of Jair, from the original Jair, Deut. 3, 14, **unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead.** The number of towns included in this designation was afterward increased to sixty. V. 5. **And Jair died, and was buried in Camon,** evidently one of the thirty cities referred to above. Although both Tola and Jair waged no wars for Israel, their rule was beneficial nevertheless, for they kept the worship of Jehovah before the nation.

THE OPPRESSION OF THE PHILISTINES AND AMORITES. — V. 6. **And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,** this being some fifty years after the death of Gideon, **and served Baalim and Ashtaroth,** the male and female deities of the Canaanites, whose service Gideon had overthrown, **and the gods of Syria,** or Aram, whose king had been defeated by Othniel, **and the gods of Zidon,** or Phenicia, **and the gods of Moab,** whom Ehud had smitten, **and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not Him,** preferring, instead, Baal in his various forms, Ashtaroth, Astarte, Camos, Milcom, or Moloch, and Dagon, as the idols of these heathen were called. The service of these false gods was often connected with the most revolting immorality, the most unnatural rites, not the least of which was the sacrifice of children. V. 7. **And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,** kindled to a consuming flame, **and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines,** who oppressed them from the west, **and into the hands of the children of Ammon,** who made their raids from the east. V. 8. **And that year,** when the Lord first delivered Israel into their hands, **they vexed and oppressed,** broke and crushed, **the children of Israel,** but that was merely the beginning of the punishment; **eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.** So the two and one half tribes were the chief sufferers in this oppression at the hands of the children of Ammon. V. 9. **Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah,** the powerful tribe which had,

till now, practically been spared, and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was sore distressed, powerless before the robbing of their harvests, the plundering of their villages, the exacting of tribute. V. 10. **And the children of Israel**, brought to their senses at last, **cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God**, whose worship naturally had fallen into decay, **and also served Baalim.** V. 11. **And the Lord said unto the children of Israel**, very likely through the high priest then in office, for their representatives had undoubtedly come to Shiloh to make their confession of guilt, **Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians**, Ex. 1—14, **and from the Amorites**, Num. 21, **from the children of Ammon**, chap. 3, 13, **and from the Philistines**, chap. 3, 31? V. 12. **The Zidonians also**, who were allies of Jabin, chap. 4, 2, **and the Amalekites**, Ex. 17, **and the Maonites**, who were allies of the Amalekites, **did oppress you; and ye cried to Me, and I delivered you out of their hand.** His kindness toward them had been untiring, His goodness unparalleled. V. 13. **Yet ye have forsaken Me and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more.** Cp. Deut. 32, 37. 38. They had chosen their gods; let these gods help them; this was a just punishment. V. 14. **Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.** If a person has repeatedly experienced God's help and yet has time and again turned back to sin, God will finally refuse to hear his pleading. V. 15. **And the children of Israel**, truly repentant and fully conscious of their utter helplessness, **said unto the Lord, We have sinned; do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee**, anything in the line of a direct punishment; **deliver us only, we pray Thee, this day.** V. 16. **And they put away the strange gods**, introduced among them by the strange, the heathen nations, **from among them and served the Lord**, thus giving evidence of their sincere repentance; **and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel**, literally, "it became too short," the misery of the penitent people now lasted too long for Him, He no longer felt anger against them. V. 17. **Then the children of Ammon were gathered together and encamped in Gilead**, in the part of Gilead occupied by them. **And the children of Israel**, at least the tribes concerned in the present oppression, if not the entire nation, **assembled themselves together and encamped in Mizpeh**, that is, Ramoth in Gilead, some ten miles west of Jordan. V. 18. **And the people and princes of Gilead**, all the nobles and rulers of the tribes east of Jordan, together with all their hosts, **said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon**, the advantage being on the side of the aggressor? **He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead**, not king, but leader, whom they would gladly follow as the man selected by God. God is rich in grace, patience, and mercy. He who seeks Him in earnest repentance is accepted by Him and delivered from all his afflictions.

CHAPTER 11.

Jephthah's Vow and Victory.

JEPHTHAH CHOSEN AS LEADER AGAINST AMMON. — V. 1. **Now Jephthah, the Gileadite, was a mighty man of valor**, distinguished for courage and energy, **but he was the son of an harlot**, born outside of wedlock; **and Gilead**, one of the prominent men of the tribe, **begat Jephthah**, afterwards acknowledging him and rearing him in his house. V. 2. **And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah**, expelled him from the home as not on the same level with them, **and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman**, of one who was not properly a wife, even in the sense of a concubine, the stain resting upon his birth excluded him from the rights of a child in the family. V. 3. **Then Jephthah**, unable to find support among the elders of Gilead, **fled from his brethren**, an outcast of society, **and dwelt in the land of Tob**, a region toward the northeast, on the boundary of Syria; **and there were gathered vain men**, idle adventurers, **to Jephthah, and went out with him**, on expeditions of war and plunder, after the manner of the Bedouins. V. 4. **And it came to pass in process of time that the children of Ammon made war against Israel**, as related in the preceding chapter. V. 5. **And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob**, for they believed him, with his qualities of valor and sagacity, with his military ability, to be the very man in this emergency; v. 6. **and they said unto Jephthah**, who had meanwhile acquired fame, rest, a family, and possessions, and was a worshiper of the true God, **Come and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.** V. 7. **And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead**, in reminding them of the former harsh treatment which he had received at their hands, **Did not ye hate me and expel me out of my father's house**, namely, by not taking his part against the jealous brothers

of his family? **And why are ye come unto me now, when ye are in distress?** So many years they had permitted the wrong to be unrighted, but now that they were in trouble they could find him. V. 8. **And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us and fight against the children of Ammon and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.** That was their way of acknowledging the wrong they had done and trying to atone for it. V. 9. **And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?** It is a condition rather than a question: If you bring me back, and then stand united to fight Ammon and Jehovah finds you worthy of His blessing, then I will be your head. V. 10. **And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah,** with a solemn oath, **The Lord be witness between us if we do not so according to thy words.** Not only in their obedience toward him, but also in their behavior toward Jehovah they were willing to be guided by his instruction and direction. V. 11. **Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them,** leader in both peace and war; **and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh,** he repeated the conditions under which he would accept the office, and stated the obligations which devolved upon both him and the people. Thus Jephthah forgave and forgot the past insults in his willingness to serve Jehovah.

Jephthah's Message to the Ammonites. V. 12. **And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon,** for he intended to remove every suspicion as though he had ruthlessly violated the Lord's command not to molest the children of Ammon, Deut. 2, 5. 9. 19, **saying, What hast thou to do with me,** what matter should cause us to wage war against each other, **that thou art come against me to fight in my land?** V. 13. **And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok and unto Jordan,** for a part of the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, had originally been in the hands of Moab and Ammon, Num. 21, 26. **Now, therefore, restore those lands again peaceably.** V. 14. **And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon,** v. 15. **and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab nor the land of the children of Ammon;** v. 16. **but when Israel came up from Egypt and walked through the wilderness unto the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh,** Num. 14, 25; 13, 26, v. 17. **then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto,** Num. 20, 18. 21. **And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab; but he would not consent; and Israel abode in Kadesh.** This was at the time when the children of Israel were on the western side of the mountains of Seir. V. 18. **Then they went along through the wilderness,** marching south to the Elanitic Gulf, **and thence east into the desert, and compassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab,** Num. 21, 11, **and pitched on the other side of Arnon, on the south side, but came not within the border of Moab,** to the territory actually occupied by the Moabites; **for Arnon was the border of Moab.** V. 19. **And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place.** V. 20. **But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.** V. 21. **And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.** V. 22. **And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan.** This account agrees exactly and almost verbally with Num. 21, 21—25. Jephthah relates the history as it concerned the children of Israel and shows the false pretense of the king of Ammon. V. 23. **So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel,** by a war of extermination, **and shouldest thou possess it?** For Ammon had not conquered Sihon and his host. V. 24. **Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh, thy god, giveth thee to possess?** They would surely consider such a procedure as just and fair, if they believed their war-god to have given them the victory in battle. **So whomsoever the Lord, our God, shall drive out from before us, them will we possess,** for Israel was surely entitled to the same consideration. V. 25. **And now art thou anything better than Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab,** namely, at the time when Israel conquered the land east of Jordan? **Did he ever strive,** enter into litigation, **against Israel, or did he ever fight against them,** although he might have claimed an interest in the land with greater right than the Ammonites, Num. 21, 26, v. 26. **while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred**

years? **Why, therefore, if so sure of their ownership, did ye not recover them within that time?** Possession, so long undisputed, could not be called in question at this late day. V. 27. **Wherefore I, Israel, have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me;** the Ammonites were using their supposed claim to the land as a pretext for attacking Israel. **The Lord, the Judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.** Jephthah placed his case in the hands of Jehovah as the righteous Judge, who would render His decision by bestowing victory upon the righteous cause. V. 28. **Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him;** he refused to change his plans. The fact that God occasionally suffers the wickedness of the enemies to continue as a punishment upon His people does not change the fact that their doing is still wickedness before Him.

JEPHTHAH, AFTER HIS VICTORY, KEEPS HIS VOW. — V. 29. **Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh,** through the entire country east of Jordan, in order to muster as large an army as possible, **and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead,** to Ramoth in Gilead, with his entire army, to join that already assembled in camp at that place, **and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon,** he attacked them in battle. V. 30. **And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, If Thou shalt without fail,** most assuredly, **deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,** v. 31. **then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon,** after having gained the victory over them, **shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.** V. 32. **So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands.** V. 33. **And he smote them from Aroer,** the northern city of this name, **even till thou come to Minnith,** a city not far from Heshbon, **even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards,** Abel Keramim, whose location is not known, **with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.** Jephthah's victory was a deed of faith. V. 34. **And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels, castanets, and with dances,** an expression of highest joy, a springing and leaping for happiness; **and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter,** he lavished upon her as his pet, the darling of his household, all the affection and devotion of a heart that had long been lonely. V. 35. **And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes,** as a sign of deep distress and mourning, **and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me,** literally, "Deeply hast thou caused me to bow, and thou alone art distressing me," unwittingly causing him the depest agony; **for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back,** he could not make his vow unsaid. V. 36. **And she said unto him,** in a most beautiful and, at the same time, a most profoundly pathetic manner, **My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.** Jehovah had hearkened to Jephthah in giving him the victory, and so he must, in return, unfailingly keep his vow. The entire narrative is full of delicate and tender touches. V. 37. **And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months,** so long he should delay the paying of his vow, **that I may go up and down upon the mountains,** far from the haunts of men, **and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows,** for by the vow of her father she was destined to perpetual virginity, one of the saddest lots that could befall a daughter of Israel, the only child, moreover, through which the house of her father could be continued. V. 38. **And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.** V. 39. **And it came to pass at the end of two months that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed,** by consecrating her to the service of the Lord, Ex. 13, 1. 2; Num. 18, 15, as one of the women serving at the door of the Tabernacle, Ex. 38, 8; 1 Sam. 2, 22; **and she knew no man,** the vow of her father denied her the married estate, and she had agreed to that vow. **And it was a custom in Israel** v. 40. **that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in a year,** celebrating her in songs, in a festival, of which nothing further is known. That, then, was the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter: she had to leave the house of her father and was deprived of the right to marry, her fate being at that time unparalleled in Israel. It should be noted that this story affords no basis of proof for the unnatural system in vogue in convents, especially since the motive was entirely different.2)

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2) Cp. *Lehre und Wehre*, Dec., 1916; Stoeckhardt, *Biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 190.

CHAPTER 12.

Civil War in Israel.

THE DEFEAT OF THE EPHRAIMITES. — V. 1. **And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together and went northward,** or, marched to Zaphon, a town in the tribe of Gad, on the eastern side of the Jordan Valley, **and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon,** to attack them in battle, **and didst not call us to go with thee?** It was not zeal for fighting the Lord's battles which prompted this outburst, but a presumptuous jealousy, because the Ephraimites had not shared in the booty and in the results of success. **We will burn thine house upon thee with fire.** It was the same overbearing pride which they had shown with Gideon, but the threat which they added in this case showed that they were even more presumptuous at this time than before. V. 2. **And Jephthah,** in an endeavor to make the situation clear to the arrogant meddlers, **said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon,** literally, "A man of war was I, I and my people, and the children of Ammon [on the other side] very"; he and his fellow-citizens were engaged in a severe struggle with the invaders; **and when I called you,** this fact being omitted in chapter 11, because it had been unsuccessful, **ye delivered me not out of their hands.** The Ephraimites had probably refused to take part in the campaign because Jephthah had been chosen leader without their consent. V. 3. **And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands,** he staked the most precious possession which he had, **and passed over against the children of Ammon,** in a bold attack upon their army, **and the Lord delivered them into my hand; wherefore, then, are ye come unto me this day to fight against me?** Although speaking in the name of all the Gileadites, he placed his own person in the foreground, because the enmity was directed chiefly against his person. V. 4. **Then Jephthah gathered together,** mobilized for immediate military duty, **all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim,** not only in self-defense, but as the judge of the nation putting down rebellion with force of arms; **and the men of Gilead,** of the entire country east of Jordan, **smote Ephraim because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites,** thus heaping upon them the insult that their army was really a pack of deserters, a set of fugitives, a bunch of dissatisfied loafers from west of Jordan, a statement which deeply affected their tribal honor. V. 5. **And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites,** the fords which led to the country of Ephraim; **and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped,** who had not been killed in battle, **said, Let me go over, that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite?** For they did not want to slay any innocent persons. **If he said, Nay;** v. 6. **then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth** (stream, flood); **and he said Sibboleth; for he could not frame** (was not able) **to pronounce it right.** It was a difference in dialect, and the Ephraimites simply could not get the sound right; their pronunciation betrayed them. **Then they took him,** every Ephraimite who was thus exposed, **and slew him at the passages of Jordan; and there fell at that time,** in the entire campaign, **of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.** Thus the rebellious arrogance of Ephraim was punished. V. 7. **And Jephthah judged Israel six years,** his jurisdiction apparently extending chiefly over the country east of Jordan. **Then died Jephthah, the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.** Rebellions take place also in the midst of God's people, the Church of Christ, and in more than one case the defenders of the truth have made a certain statement of Scripture a Shibboleth, in order to make a distinction between friends and enemies. But the weapons of our warfare are spiritual.

THE JUDGESHIPS OF IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON. — V. 8. **And after him** (Jephthah) **Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.** This Bethlehem was that in the tribe of Zebulun, and Ibzan's jurisdiction seems to have extended over the northern tribes only. V. 9. **And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad,** saw them well provided for in marriage, **and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years,** living in princely and happy state in the midst of the people. V. 10. **Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Bethlehem.** V. 11. **And after him Elon, a Zebulonite,** in the same part of Canaan, **judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years.** V. 12. **And Elon, the Zebulonite, died,** also after a peaceful and happy judgeship, **and was buried in Aijalon, in the country of Zebulun.** V. 13. **And after him Abdon, the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite,** in the country of Ephraim, **judged Israel.** V. 14. **And he had forty sons and thirty nephews** (grandsons), **that rode on threescore and ten ass colts,** in itself a mark of princely authority; **and he judged Israel eight years,** keeping the people in discipline and in obedience to God. V. 15. **And Abdon, the son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites,** that section of the mountains formerly occupied by this heathen tribe. If the teachers and rulers called by God will at all times follow the rule of God's Word, they will be able to lead even the weak in knowledge the right way.

CHAPTER 13.

The Birth of Samson.

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL. — V. 1. **And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,** they fell back into their former ways of idolatry, adding to the transgression of their fathers; **and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years,** the tribes most concerned in this oppression being Dan and Judah with Simeon. V. 2. **And there was a certain man of Zorah,** Josh. 19, 41, **of the family of the Danites,** the tribes nearest to the territory of the Philistines, **whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and bare not,** a fact which was regarded as a painful visitation of the Lord, if not as a distinct curse. V. 3. **And the Angel of the Lord,** He who is equal with God in essence, who always revealed Himself when help and salvation was needed, **appeared unto the woman and said unto her, Behold, now, thou art barren and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive and bear a son,** an announcement much like that made to Abraham, to Zacharias, and to Mary. V. 4. **Now, therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink,** the latter being a very intoxicating beverage usually made of barley, dates, and honey, **and eat not any unclean thing,** Lev. 11; Deut. 14; v. 5. **for, lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb,** from his birth to his death, Num. 6, 5. **And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.** It was only a beginning which he made, for his victories were not full and final, the complete deliverance being effected later. V. 6. **Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me,** the word used for a prophet or for one in the most intimate relation toward God, **and his countenance,** his appearance, **was like the countenance of an angel of God,** that is, the special Angel, in whom the invisible God reveals Himself to men, this fact being well known among the children of Israel, **very terrible,** inspiring the greatest awe and reverence; **but I asked him not whence he was,** not daring to ask for this information, **neither told he me his name;** v. 7. **but he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing; for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.** As a man set apart to God by a vow, consecrated to His service, the son who was to be born should lead his entire life. The children of Christian parents are also consecrated to the Lord, even before their birth, and should spend their entire life in His service.

THE SECOND APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL. — V. 8. **Then Manoah intreated the Lord and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which Thou didst send come again unto us and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.** He was not unbelieving, but he desired a confirmation of his wife's statements and further instructions as to their manner of conducting themselves. V. 9. **And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah,** for He has respect to the scruples of His weak children if they but turn to Him in childlike trust. **And the Angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field; but Manoah, her husband, was not with her.** V. 10. **And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband,** announced the fact of the Angel's coming to her husband, **and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day.** Her language was again that which implied that she believed the visitor to be the Angel of the Lord. V. 11. **And Manoah arose,** from the work which he just then had in hand, **and went after his wife,** who ran ahead in her eagerness, **and came to the man and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And He said, I am.** V. 12. **And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?** When this happy event would take place, he wanted to be sure of treating the boy in a manner which would accord entirely with God's plans. V. 13. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware;** she had sufficient instructions concerning her conduct. V. 14. **She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine,** not even the tendrils and leaves, **neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe,** the responsibility was naturally laid on the mother, because a holy and pure consecration was to rest on him whom she was to bring forth. V. 15. **And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, I pray Thee, let us detain Thee until we shall have made ready a kid for Thee.** This reminds us of the manner in which Gideon wanted to show hospitality to the Angel of the Lord, chap. 6, 18—21. V. 16. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain Me, I will not eat of thy bread,** of the meal prepared for Him; **and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord,** literally, "But if thou wilt offer a burnt sacrifice to Jehovah, offer it"; that is, He would not hinder Manoah, he might go ahead with his preparations. **For Manoah knew not that He was an Angel**

of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord in the very special sense of the word. V. 17. **And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, What is Thy name, that, when Thy sayings come to pass, we may do Thee honor?** namely, by sending presents. V. 18. **And the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after My name, seeing it is secret?** The great name of the heavenly Visitor was *Peli,* that is, Wonderful, the God of wonders, Is. 9, 6 (5). A miracle He performed here before Manoah and his wife, but a far greater miracle was to be performed in the future, when He whose name is Wonderful would be born of a virgin. V. 19. **So Manoah,** still not knowing the identity of the visitor, **took a kid with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord,** as a burnt offering; **and the Angel did wondrously,** performed a miracle with it before their eyes; **and Manoah and his wife looked on.** V. 20. **For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar,** evidently in a manner similar to that related in the case of Gideon, chap. 6, 21, for the flame seems to have come out of the rock, **that the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar,** thereby revealing His identity. **And Manoah and his wife looked on it and fell on their faces to the ground,** in worshipful adoration at the presence of God. V. 21. **But the Angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife,** He did not present Himself in visible form again. **Then Manoah knew,** he finally understood and was convinced, **that he was an Angel of the Lord.** V. 22. **And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die because we have seen God.** Cp. Gen. 16, 13; Ex. 33, 20. V. 23. **But his wife,** whose faith was more childlike, but also firmer, **said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would He have showed us all these things;** the acceptance of their sacrifice, together with the miraculous revelation, showed that the Lord was not angry with them; **nor would as at this time have told us such things as these,** He would not have given them the promise of a son at a stated time if He had planned to put them to death. V. 24. **And the woman,** the wife of Manoah, in due time **bare a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.** Cp. 1 Sam. 2, 21. V. 25. **And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.** This statement serves as an introduction to the following chapters, with their narration of Samson's exploits, for in every case the Spirit of Jehovah took hold on him and impelled him to perform special deeds of valor against the Philistines. Samson is clearly a type of Christ, whose conception and birth was far more miraculous, however. And Christ was always and in extraordinary measure filled with the Holy Ghost, for He was, even in His human existence, united with the Father in the most intimate relationship. And as Samson was a savior of his people, so Christ, again in a measure beyond compare, is the Redeemer of all His people, of the whole world, from the oppression of death and the devil.

CHAPTER 14.

Samson's Wedding-Feast.

The Preliminary Arrangements. — V. 1. **And Samson went down to Timnath,** in the region where the highlands of Judah merge into the plains of Philistia, **and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines,** who were therefore encroaching pretty far upon the territory of the Israelites. V. 2. **And he came up,** to the hilly country where the home of his parents was, **and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now, therefore, get her for me to wife.** The act of giving children in marriage is clearly the prerogative of the parents according to the plain doctrine of God's Word. A young man may state his preference and, in most cases, urge his suit successfully, but first with his own parents, for unless he sets forth with their blessing, or at least with their express consent, the serious business of taking a wife may prove disastrous to him. V. 3. **Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, of his own tribe, or among all my people, in all Israel, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines,** for the rite of circumcision was a distinction which Israel had above all heathen nations as a sign of God's covenant. The objection of Manoah and his wife was founded upon Ex. 34, 16 and Deut. 7, 3. 4, for, although the Philistines are not expressly named in the list of heathen nations with whose members marriage was not to be consummated, yet the principle of the prohibition excluded the Philistines as well as all others. Mixed marriages are dangerous at all times, and parents will best perform their duty if they prevent the union between their children and unbelievers, and also false believers, from the start. **And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.** It may have been only a temporary attachment which Samson felt, but he was insistent, and his parents

finally consented. V. 4. **But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord,** that Jehovah had so arranged matters, **that he sought an occasion against the Philistines,** a valid ground for a quarrel and for an attack upon them; **for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel,** the Lord had delivered Israel into their hand to be oppressed by them, chap. 13, 1. V. 5. **Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath,** the young man evidently preceding his parents in his eagerness to press his suit with the woman of his choice, **and came to the vineyards of Timnath,** to the hills which bordered upon a more desolate section of country; **and, behold, a young lion,** fierce and bloodthirsty, **roared against him,** rushed upon him with all evidences of bloodthirstiness. V. 6. **And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,** urging him on with great force, **and he rent him as he would have rent a kid,** taking hold of the beast with his bare hands and slaughtering him with the greatest ease, **and he had nothing in his hand,** no weapon of any kind; **but he told not his father or his mother what he had done,** he was conscious for the first time that the strength which he possessed was an unusual power, and he felt diffident about discussing it even with his parents, all the more so because they would have been startled by the account of the danger in which he had been. V. 7. **And he went down and talked with the woman,** with the idea of finding out more of her character and suitability by a conversation with her; **and she pleased Samson well,** the impression which he had first gained was confirmed. V. 8. **And after a time he returned to take her,** coming down once more with his parents to celebrate the nuptials, **and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion,** for the heat of the dry season is so great as to take up all the moisture from a dead body before decay sets in; **and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion,** the wild bees had lost no time in using the dry carcass as a hive. V. 9. **And he took thereof in his hands,** drawing it out with his fingers as the only spoons available and using his hands as vessels, and went on eating, munched of the honey as he went along, **and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat,** also relishing the delicacy; **but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion,** for that would have brought out the story of the encounter with the lion. This incident gave Samson the suggestion for the riddle which he proposed during the week of feasting. A greater than Samson, Christ, the almighty God, has overcome the roaring lion, Satan, and this victory is the source of peace, salvation, and life for all men.

THE RIDDLE AT THE WEDDING-FEAST. —V. 10. **So his father went down unto the woman,** to signify his parental approval of the match and to attend the wedding; **and Samson made there a feast,** intending to live in Timnath and not take his bride to the city of his parents; **for so used the young men to do,** that was the custom at that time, that the bridegroom provided the entertainment. V. 11. **And it came to pass, when they,** the parents and relatives of the bride, **saw him, that they brought thirty companions,** attendants of the groom, "sons of the bride-chamber," **to be with him,** for Samson had neglected to provide himself with these very necessary witnesses, with this retinue of merrymakers. V. 12. **And Samson said unto them,** evidently as soon as the festivities began, **I will now put forth a riddle unto you,** announce or propose it to them; **if ye can certainly declare it me,** give its solution, **within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets,** ordinary garments, **and thirty change of garments,** dresses of state, to be worn on festival occasions; v. 13. **but if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him,** feeling sure of their ability to gain the prize held out before them, **Put forth thy riddle that we may hear it.** V. 14. **And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,** literally, "Out of the feeder, consumer [German, *Fresser*], came forth food, and out of the powerful one something sweet." **And they could not in three days expound the riddle,** for so long they attempted to get the solution honestly. V. 15. **And it came to pass on the seventh day that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband that he may declare unto us the riddle,** she was to manage in some way to get him to reveal the solution or at least a key to its understanding, **lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire; have ye called,** invited, **us to take that we have,** to impoverish, to plunder them? **Is it not so?** They implied that the riddle was merely a pretense, a scheme, to make them pay, although they had willingly agreed to the terms stated by Samson. Their threat shows their callous brutality, their miserable covetousness. V. 16. **And Samson's wife wept before him and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not,** the easiest and handiest reproach in the circumstances; **thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people and hast not told it me.** Her speech shows that the woman, in a choice between her husband and her people, inclined to the Philistines, the usual result in the case of mixed marriages. **And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother,** who might, till now, have ex-

pected him to share his secrets with them, and **shall I tell it thee? V. 17. And she wept before him the seven days,** for her curiosity had prompted her to badger him from the very first day, **while their feast lasted; and it came to pass on the seventh day that he told her, because she lay sore upon him,** she was unbearably importunate in her pleading; **and she told the riddle to the children of her people,** thus betraying the confidence of her husband. V. 18. **And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down,** before the time as fixed by him had expired, **What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle,** a proverbial expression which, at the same time, indicated his contempt for the method employed by them. V. 19. **And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon,** a city of the Philistines on the coast of the Mediterranean, **and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil,** their attire, of which the fallen were usually stripped, **and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle.** "It is in harmony with the dramatic course of the action that Samson flung to his treacherous friends, as the price of their deception, garments snatched from their own countrymen." (Lange.) **And his anger was kindled,** in a flame of bitter resentment against the entire Philistine nation, **and he went up to his father's house,** leaving his wife at Timnath. V. 20. **But Samson's wife,** for such the woman now was before all the world, **was given to his companion,** to his chief attendant at the wedding festival, to his "best man," **whom he had used as his friend.** Cp. John 3, 29. This action on the part of the woman's parents shows the low state of morals in their nation, and the fact that the woman added infidelity to treason characterizes her as well; hers was a mean and small soul. Note: It was the Spirit of God who urged Samson to slay the Philistines. The same Spirit to-day is full of zeal against all godlessness and impels the believers to use the weapons of the Word in combating every form of unchristian doctrine and conduct.

CHAPTER 15.

Samson's Heroic Deeds.

SAMSON'S REVENGE ON THE PHILISTINES. — V. 1. **But it came to pass within a while after,** it may have been a matter of six weeks or two months later, **in the time of wheat-harvest,** which usually begins in the first part of May in Palestine, **that Samson visited his wife with a kid,** coming with a present to show that he bore her no personal grudge; **and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber,** the inner apartment of the house, which the women occupied. **But her father would not suffer him to go in,** he barred his way. V. 2. **And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her,** the first excuse which popped into his mind, suggested by his anxiety and fear; **therefore I gave her to thy companion. Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her, I pray thee, instead of her.** The offer to let his other daughter be Samson's wife was made with the idea of placating the wronged husband, especially as he held up the beauty of this daughter as an added attraction; another glimpse of the low moral state of the Philistines. V. 3. **And Samson said concerning them,** literally, "to them," either the father of his former wife and those present, or to his own family and neighbors, **Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure;** they would not really be able to blame him for his conduct in doing them evil. He turned his personal wrong into an occasion of a national exploit against the enemy of his people as a whole, for he regarded the act of his father-in-law as a manifestation of the Philistine hatred against the children of Israel. V. 4. **And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes,** small jackals, which are very plentiful in that neighborhood to this day, **and took firebrands,** torches, **and turned tail to tail,** tying the jackals together by twos, **and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.** V. 5. **And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn,** the grain-fields, **of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks,** where the grain was already stacked, **and also the standing corn,** which was not yet cut, **with the vineyards and olives,** for the three hundred animals, almost crazed by the flaming torches that wrapped their tails in fire, sped first through the lowlands and then up the hillsides, through the vineyards and olive plantations. V. 6. **Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they,** men acquainted with the facts, answered, **Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire,** probably by setting fire to their house and burning it with all the inmates. It was an act of the most brutal cruelty. V. 7. **And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will**

cease, he would most certainly not rest until he had taken revenge in full upon the Philistines for this new act of brutality, which was directed also against him. V. 8. **And he smote them hip and thigh,** with a destruction involving everything, said of unmerciful warfare, in which no quarter is given, **with a great slaughter; and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam,** in a cleft or cave on the border of the Philistine country, a standing menace to the Philistines. The believers must never grow lax in their warfare against all their spiritual enemies, since their soul's salvation is at stake.

SAMSON'S LONE VICTORY. — V. 9. **Then the Philistines,** in order to take revenge for the slaughter inflicted upon them by Samson, **went up,** taking the field against Israel, **and pitched in Judah,** encamped in the territory of this tribe, **and spread themselves in Lehi,** probably on the road leading to the highlands of Judah from the southwest. V. 10. **And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us,** that is, to put him to death. V. 11. **Then three thousand men of Judah,** blind to the fact that they had, in Samson, a leader of incomparable strength and energy, under whose leadership they might easily have thrown off the bondage of the Philistines, **went to the top of the rock Etam and said to Samson,** in a statement which laid bare the cowardliness of their hearts, bound in idolatry as they were, **Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us?** They rebuked him for a reckless fool, who was bringing trouble upon all their heads. **And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.** He found it necessary to apologize for his conduct to his own brethren, who refused to recognize in him their deliverer. V. 12. **And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines,** an act of betrayal by which they hoped to save their lives and fortunes. **And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves,** namely, for the purpose of putting him to death; for matters had reached a stage where this was not beyond the bounds of possibility, and Samson was powerless in that case, since he would not soil his hands with the blood of his countrymen. V. 13. **And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast and deliver thee into their hand; but surely we will not kill thee.** They gave Samsón the assurance which he needed for his plans. **And they bound him with two new cords and brought him up from the rock,** into the camp of the Philistines. V. 14. **And when he came unto Lehi,** where the headquarters of the enemy were, **the Philistines shouted against him,** their jubilant shouts met him, for they believed that he was now in their power. **And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,** filled him with invincible, superhuman strength, **and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burned with fire,** like tow singed by the action of the flame, **and his bands loosed from off his hands,** literally, "melted or flowed from his hands," as though turned to a liquid. V. 15. **And,** looking about for any kind of a weapon, **he found a new jawbone of an ass,** of one but recently fallen on the field, whose bones still had great elasticity, **and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith,** for the enemies, seized with a panic of terror, were utterly unable to defend themselves. It was a remarkable victory. V. 16. **And Samson said,** shouting out his song of triumph, **With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass, have I slain a thousand men.** It is a stanza of poetic ecstasy:

> With the jawbone of an ass
> I slew two armies;
> With the jawbone of an ass
> I took vengeance on a thousand.

V. 17. **And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking,** when he had uttered his song of victory, **that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand and called that place Ramath-lehi** (hill of the jawbone). V. 18. **And he was sore athirst,** for the battle and the pursuit of the enemies had been strenuous work, and it was in the midst of summer, **and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of Thy servant,** for Samson was conscious of the fact that he was fighting the battles of Jehovah for His people; **and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised,** the enemies of the divine covenant, the Philistines? V. 19. **But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw,** He opened a mortarlike cleft in the rock at Lehi, **and there came water thereout,** a miracle in answer to the prayer of Samson; **and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived; wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore** (well of him that cried), **which is in Lehi unto this day,** the miraculous spring was still to be seen when this book was written. V. 20. **And he,** Samson, **judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.** His activity as judge is purposely referred to, for it was due to his efforts that the true God was once more worshiped in Israel. Note: In the power of the Lord it is possible also for us to tear asunder all bands, to overcome all obstacles, and to conquer the hostile world. For the Lord Himself strengthens and revives us in the battle which we are obliged to wage in this world.

CHAPTER 16.

The Last Deeds and the Death of Samson.

SAMSON AT GAZA. — V. 1. **Then went Samson to Gaza,** on the Mediterranean, in Southwestern Philistia, one of the chief strongholds of his enemies, **and saw there an harlot,** a public prostitute, **and went in unto her,** thus becoming guilty of fornication. Samson is a type of the entire Israelitish nation at that time; for as long as he clung to the Lord and followed His direction, He was a hero and champion against the enemies of Israel, but when he forsook Jehovah's commandments and indulged in sensuality, the disapproval of the Lord rested upon him, just as it did upon the spiritual adultery, the idolatry, of his people. V. 2. **And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in,** setting watchmen all about the harlot's house, **and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city,** men charged with taking him as soon as he should attempt to leave, **and were quiet all the night,** lest they should reveal their plans to Samson, saying, **In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.** With the coming of the dawn, when it would become light outside, they would have the courage to attack their enemy. V. 3. **And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight,** the watchmen apparently having settled down so quietly that they did not notice his coming, **and took the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts,** wrenching them from their foundations, **and went away with them, bar and all,** as it had been locked in place to prevent his escape, **and put them,** the heavy gates with the posts, **upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron,** calmly making that trip to the mountains toward the east with the immense load resting upon him. The humiliation inflicted upon the Philistines was all the greater since the gates of a city symbolized its civic and national strength. It is not stated here that the Spirit of the Lord urged Samson to perform this deed, but he followed his own idea, making a show of his great physical strength. It is the beginning of severe transgression for a believer to put his trust in his own ability; for pride cometh before a fall.

SAMSON AND DELILAH. — V. 4. **And it came to pass afterward,** some time after this exploit, **that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah.** This was not very far from his home place, and he entered into an unlawful union with this woman, whose name is purposely mentioned, for she, by her sinful fascination, debilitated his strength. V. 5. **And the lords of the Philistines,** well acquainted with the power of voluptuousness, **came up unto her and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth,** by making use of every possible allurement she was to find out the secret of his great strength, **and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him,** to get him into their power and permanently to subdue him; **and we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver,** a sum totaling between 3,000 and 3,500 dollars, frankly bribe money. As a true daughter of Philistia the woman agreed to sell the man who trusted her so foolishly. V. 6. **And Delilah said to Samson,** feigning a flattering reverence for his great strength, **Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee,** so that some one might get him into his power. V. 7. **And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withes,** seven cords of animal tendons not yet stretched, **that were never dried, then shall I be weak and be as another man,** endowed with only the normal strength of the average man. V. 8. **Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withes which had not been dried,** ropes made of fresh tendons, **and she bound him with them,** very likely with an air of playfulness. V. 9. **Now there were men lying in wait,** in ambush, **abiding with her in the chamber,** for she had permitted a Philistine spy to conceal himself in the inner apartment. **And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he,** momentarily brought back to his senses by her cry of treason, **brake the withes as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire,** when it is brought near enough to feel the fire's heat. **So his strength was not known.** V. 10. **And Delilah said unto Samson,** "with the brazen effrontery characteristic of women whose charms are great and whose hearts are bad," **Behold, thou hast mocked me and told me lies; now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.** V. 11. **And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied,** that had never been used for any kind of work, **then shall I be weak and be as another man.** V. 12. **Delilah therefore took new ropes and bound him therewith,** again as unconcerned as possible, **and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liers-in-wait abiding in the chamber;** she had again permitted a Philistine spy to conceal himself in the inner apartment. **And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.** V. 13. **And Delilah said unto Samson,** her avarice and vexation goading her on, **Hitherto thou hast mocked me and told me lies; tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound.** She is past cajolery and now demands to know. **And he said unto her,** coming ever nearer to the full truth, **If thou weavest the seven**

locks of my head with the web, namely, that on the loom standing in her apartment, as common, in those days, as a spinning-wheel was at later periods in other countries. V. 14. **And she,** acting upon his suggestion, wove the long hair of his head into her web as woof, and then **fastened it with the pin,** the batten which is used to beat up the weft, thus clamping his hair securely to the loom, **and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep,** for he had fallen asleep while she was operating the loom, **and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web,** he wrenched his hair loose and left the disappointed woman with her loom. V. 15. **And she said unto him,** at his next visit, **How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?** She reproached him with the insincerity of his regard for her, since real affection would have no secrets from her. **Thou hast mocked me these three times and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.** V. 16. **And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him,** ceaselessly teasing and boring him to death, **so that his soul was vexed unto death,** plagued with impatience with her and so weary that the freshness and keenness of his mind were gone from him, v. 17. **that he told her all his heart,** he unfolded to her the innnermost secrets of his heart, **and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb. If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man.** V. 18. **And when Delilah saw,** judging from his entire attitude, **that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines,** who had evidently become doubtful as to results, **saying, Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and brought money in their hand,** for Delilah would undoubtedly not have gone ahead with her betrayal of her lover unless she had had the definite assurance that the money which she coveted would be forthcoming. V. 19. **And she made him,** Samson, **sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man,** one of those concealed in ambush in her apartment, **and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him,** she, the weak woman, was strong enough to manage him, **and his strength went from him.** V. 20 **And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep and said, I will go out as at other times before and shake myself,** thus freeing himself from the fetters and from the hands of the Philistines. **And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him,** with the clipping of his hair, with the end of his Nazarite state, Jehovah had gone from him. V. 21. **But the Philistines took him,** laid hold on him in avenging hatred, **and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass,** as a safeguard against his escaping; **and he did grind in the prison-house,** condemned to the lowest work of female slaves. That is the invariable result if men love the lusts of the world, especially such sins against the Sixth Commandment. He who yields to the temptation several times will become weaker with every attack made upon him, until he becomes a slave of sin.

THE END OF SAMSON. — V. 22. **Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven,** literally, as when he was shaven, for it came out again in a very short while, and the Philistines did not remember the significance of this. V. 23. **Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon, their god, and to rejoice,** as over a great victory, to be celebrated with a general feast of thanksgiving; **for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hand.** Dagon was the chief idol of the Philistines, being worshiped not only at Gaza, but also at Ashdod; he was usually represented with the body of a fish, but with human head and hands. V. 24. **And when the people saw him,** as Samson was led forth, **they praised their god,** in a foolish burst of idolatry; **for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy and the destroyer of our country,** for such he was by his having set their fields and orchards afire, **which slew many of us.** V. 25. **And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry,** in the course of the feasting and carousing, **that they said, Call for Samson that he may make us sport,** be the object of ribald jesting and cutting mockery. **And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport,** he made a fine target for all the mean and mocking sayings which they could think of as their tongues were loosened by wine; **and they set him between the pillars,** those of the house or temple in which the feast was being celebrated. V. 26. **And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand,** who led him from one place to another on account of his blindness, **Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.** The building was put up in such a manner as to have not only the lower part, but also the upper open galleries resting principally upon two mighty pillars, which supported the chief beams of the vast building. V. 27. **Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there,** the more distinguished visitors occupying the lower part of the house; **and there were upon the roof,** the open gal-

lery above, surrounded by open trellis-work, about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. V. 28. **And Samson,** who had repented of his deep fall, **called unto the Lord and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.** He no longer placed his trust in himself nor in his hair, but only and entirely in Jehovah, the true God. In revenging himself for the loss of his eyes, he would at the same time inflict a terrible punishment upon the enemies of Israel. V. 29. **And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood,** its entire weight being concentrated there, **and on which it was borne up,** he pressed steadily and firmly against them, **of the one with his right hand and of the other with his left.** V. 30. **And Samson said, Let me,** literally, my soul, **die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might,** pulling the pillars down with him; **and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein,** the entire building toppled over and crashed down upon itself, burying the merrymakers under its ruins. **So the dead which he,** Samson, **slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.** V. 31. **Then his brethren,** the members of his own people, **and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up,** in a funeral procession which gave him more honor in death than he had gotten in life, **and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah, his father,** who had not lived to see the shame of his great son. The Philistines, terrified by the evidence of God's almighty power in the catastrophe which had befallen them, permitted the body of Samson to be removed without objection. Their princes were dead, their power, for the time being, broken. **And he judged Israel twenty years.** Thus Samson died with a prayer to the true God upon his lips. And so He raises up His children from their transgressions, leads them to repentance, and helps them to obtain the end of faith, their soul's salvation.

CHAPTER 17.

The Idolatry of Micah.

The Making of the Image. — V. 1. **And there was a man of Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah.** The fine meaning of this man's name, "who is like Jehovah," does not change the fact that the evils of the period were growing, that the decay of the priesthood had set in, that there was a general prevalence of discord and immorality, not to speak of idolatry, in Israel. V. 2. **And he said unto his mother,** evidently a widow to whom her husband had left a considerable sum of money, **The eleven hundred shekels of silver** (about $700) **that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.** So the awful curse spoken upon the unknown thief by his mother caused Micah to return the money to her, since he feared the effect of the curses in his case. "As one shakes off rain, so he would free himself of this curse-laden money." **And his mother said,** in an effort to save her son from the effects of her terrible malediction, **Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son!** She praised him for his confession, although her own religion does not seem to have been any too pure any more. V. 3. **And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son to make a graven image and a molten image; now, therefore, I will restore it unto thee.** The money which her son handed back to her, after having taken it secretly, she immediately consecrated to the Lord for the purpose of equipping the sanctuary which Micah had planned. V. 4. **Yet he restored the money unto his mother,** still from fear of the curse which she had uttered; **and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver** (about $128), her ardor for Jehovah having evidently cooled since she actually had the money in her hands once more, **and gave them to the founder,** to the silversmith, **who made thereof a graven image and a molten image,** image and cast-work, the pedestal probably being cast, and the picture, apparently an ox or calf, being carved or chiseled; **and they were in the house of Micah,** they were added to the equipment of his private sanctuary. V. 5. **And the man Micah had an house of gods,** a place where he worshiped, **and made an ephod,** a garment like that worn by the high priest, with the Urim and Thummim, Ex. 39, **and teraphim,** small household gods, oracle gods, **and consecrated one of his sons,** filled his hand, made him his priest, Lev. 7, 37, **who became his priest.** It was a peculiar situation which obtained in the house of Micah: he and his mother had not openly broken with the worship of Jehovah, — they rather prided themselves upon their being members of His people, — but their hearts were not wholly with the true God, as the maintaining of this private sanctuary shows. The situation has its parallel in our days, when thousands of men claim for themselves the Christian name and protest their belief in the true God, while still setting up their own private gods, whom

they then designate with some high-sounding name to dupe themselves and to deceive others. V. 6. **In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.** This note is added by the author in order to give one reason for such conditions as here described, namely, the absence of a central civil authority. The sin of Micah is committed throughout the length and breadth of the so-called civilized countries, both by gross and by fine idolatry.

A LEVITE MADE THE IDOL'S PRIEST. — V. 7. **And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah,** later the birthplace of the Savior, **of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there,** he lived there for a while as a stranger. V. 8. **And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a place.** Many of the cities which had been allotted to the Levites being still in the hands of the Canaanites, this man had no real home, and so traveled from the territory of Judah toward the north, in the hope of finding some place that would please him. **And he came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed,** the place evidently being on the main highway between the northern and southern parts of the country. V. 9. **And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.** V. 10. **And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest,** to be treated with all reverence and honor, **and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year** (about $6.40 cash) **and a suit of apparel,** the necessary clothing, **and thy victuals,** his board was thus also included. **So the Levite went in,** forgetting entirely that he was consecrated to the service of Jehovah alone. V. 11. **And the Levite was content to dwell with the man,** he made up his mind to stay; **and the young man was unto him as one of his sons,** he took care of him in the same manner as he did his sons. V. 12. **And Micah consecrated the Levite,** filled his hand, the standing expression for ordaining a priest, for inducting him into office, taken from the ceremony of laying the offerings required at the consecration of a priest upon his hands; **and the young man became his priest and was in the house of Micah.** V. 13. **Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.** It was a peculiar blindness which caused Micah to look for blessings to Jehovah against whom he was sinning with his image worship. The mere fact that the man belonged to the tribe of Levi and was really under obligation to serve at the altar of Jehovah only could never change the fact of the mortal sin which was being committed in his house day by day, for the Levite himself did wrong in permitting himself to be hired. When men who have been called to be preachers of the Gospel become chaplains in antichristian societies, in which the honor of the Savior is set aside, they are committing the same sin as the Levite of Micah.

CHAPTER 18.

Micah's Idolatry Transplanted to Laish-Dan.

THE DANITES SEEK A NEW LOCATION. — V. 1. **In those days there was no king in Israel,** this fact being noted here again to explain the behavior of the Danites and to register the author's disapproval of their action; **and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.** Dan had indeed been given an allotment, in Northern Philistia, in the foothills and in the plain along the Mediterranean, Josh. 19, 40—48, but their territory had been insufficient for their needs from the beginning, chiefly because they could not summon the necessary courage and warlike valor to force out the heathen inhabitants of that country, chap. 2, 34. V. 2. **And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts,** men specially qualified for that purpose, selected from their whole tribe, **men of valor, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, two cities in the eastern part of their territory, to spy out the land and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land,** namely, for a place where they might settle without great trouble; **who when they came to Mount Ephraim,** on that great highway from the south to the north, **to the house of Micah, they lodged there,** in some part of Micah's great establishment. V. 3. **When they were by the house of Micah,** probably on the next morning, when they passed the apartments of the family, **they knew the voice of the young man, the Levite,** they recognized the dialect of his speech, which differed from that of the Ephraimites, or they heard the sound of the bells on his priestly garments; **and they turned in thither,** their curiosity having been aroused, **and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? And what makest thou in this place? And what hast thou here?** The situation seemed so strange to them that they demanded a detailed explanation. V. 4. **And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me,**

giving an outline of his history, **and hath hired me, and I am his priest.** V. 5. **And they,** also so weak in their religious convictions and knowledge that they found no fault with the man for his action, **said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous;** the Levite's oracle was to give them information concerning the probable success of their undertaking. V. 6. **And the priest,** after having made a great show with his copy of the priest's ephod and his teraphim, **said unto them, Go in peace; before the Lord is your way wherein ye go.** The answer, "Your way is in the sight of Jehovah," was thoroughly ambiguous, but they chose to explain it in a manner favorable to their enterprise, as the Levite intended them to do. V. 7. **Then the five men departed,** continuing their scouting expedition, **and came to Laish,** in the extreme northern part of Canaan, east of the headwaters of Jordan, **and saw the people that were therein,** who belonged to the Canaanitish tribes of Northern Palestine, **how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians,** to whom they were probably related, **quiet and secure,** concerned chiefly with commercial interests and not given to warlike enterprises; **and there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything,** no hereditary ruler to oppress them in any respect, no conqueror, no tyrant, bothered them; **and they were far from the Zidonians,** their city may have been a colony of Zidon, but they were so far from the coast of the Mediterranean that assistance from there could hardly be expected, **and had no business with any man,** they had entered neither into an offensive nor a defensive alliance with any of the neighboring cities. They hurt no man, and therefore did not expect to be hurt by any one, although they belonged to the nations whom the children of Israel had been commanded to exterminate. V. 8. **And they,** the spies, **came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol,** they returned with their report; **and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?** V. 9. **And they said, Arise, that ye may go up against them; for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good; and are ye still?** The Danites were sitting there inactive, while they had such a fine opportunity to gain this city. **Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.** V. 10. **When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure,** living in careless security, and therefore easily overcome, **and to a large land,** with room for expansion on all sides; **for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth,** with all the wealth and attractiveness which distinguished the rest of Canaan. V. 11. **And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war,** fully armed for battle, each man with his family. V. 12. **And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah,** on the northern boundary of Judah, **wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan** (camp of Dan) **unto this day; behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.** An expedition for the purpose of planting a colony in this manner was at that time such an extraordinary event that the name of the camp was ever afterward remembered. But the entire undertaking was a self-appointed task on the part of Dan and was not commanded by God. It is God's will that we remain in our station and take its burdens upon us, until He Himself shows us another way. Then His mercy and blessings will be with us.

THE PRIEST OF MICAH TAKEN TO LAISH. — V. 13. **And they passed thence unto Mount Ephraim,** along the way taken by the spies, **and came unto the house of Micah.** V. 14. **Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish,** giving in advance the information which the members of their tribe would presently ask for, **Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image,** a carved and chased idol with its molten pedestal? **Now, therefore, consider what ye have to do,** the suggestion of the spies being that the Danites should not overlook this opportunity to provide themselves with a worship of their own. V. 15. **And they,** acting upon the hint received, **turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man, the Levite,** where this private sanctuary was, fully equipped with everything needed in such an institution, **even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him,** they greeted the priest most kindly. V. 16. **And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate,** at the entrance to the enclosure, near the sanctuary. V. 17. **And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither,** being familiar with the location of everything from their previous visit, **and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image,** all the equipment of the sanctuary, the objects used in worship by Micah; **and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.** This strange behavior of the priest in permitting the robbery of the sanctuary for whose care he was hired is now explained, for this paragraph is here entered, although the event took place before the Levite deserted his post. V. 18. **And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved**

image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, it was then that he had tried to interfere, **What do ye?** V. 19. **And they said unto him, Hold thy peace,** be absolutely quiet; **lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest,** the position which he had occupied in the house of Micah, chap. 17, 10. **Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?** That was the argument which had appealed to the Levite's ambitious and avaricious heart and caused him to turn his back when the five spies plundered Micah's sanctuary. V. 20. **And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people,** where he was safe. V. 21. **So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage,** all their most valuable possessions, **before them,** to have them safe in case they should be attacked by Micah and his men. V. 22. **And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house,** both those belonging to his own establishment and those of the village which arose near the sanctuary, **were gathered together and overtook the children of Dan.** V. 23. **And they cried unto the children of Dan,** hailed them, bidding them stop. **And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee that thou comest with such a company?** They feigned ignorance of any happening concerning Micah. V. 24. **And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more?** He no longer tries to deceive himself and others that it was really Jehovah's worship which he was carrying on in his house, but calls his sin by the right name, confessing his idolatry. **And what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?** V. 25. **And the children of Dan said unto him,** depending upon their superior power and holding that might makes right, **Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows,** men bitter of soul, of a fierce disposition, **run upon thee, and thou lose thy life with the lives of thy household,** any rash act on his part would cause not only his own death, but that of his entire family. V. 26. **And the children of Dan,** having bullied Micah into silence, **went their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.** He was a sadder and a wiser man, who, strictly speaking, had no redress, as he had sinned against Jehovah and could not appeal to the Lord of Israel for revenge. V. 27. **And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure,** v. 7; **and they smote them with the edge of the sword,** in a sudden attack, **and burned the city with fire.** V. 28. **And there was no deliverer,** as the spies had rightly reported, **because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob,** extending to that city, along the valley of the upper Jordan. **And they built a city and dwelt therein.** V. 29. **And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan, their father,** their progenitor, **who was born unto Israel; howbeit the name of the city was Laish,** or Leshem, Josh. 19, 47. 48, **at the first.** V. 30. **And the children of Dan set up the graven image,** for idolatrous purposes; **and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh,** rather, the descendant of Moses, for that, apparently, was the name of the idolatrous priest, **he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land,** namely, when the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant and became masters of the entire country, 1 Sam. 4, 21. 22. V. 31. **And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.** Mark: Idolatry in every form, false doctrine, quickly and easily finds adherents and is hard to eradicate when once established. He that is guilty of introducing false doctrine not only deceives himself, but also gives occasion to others to fall. The harm usually extends to many generations and destroys many souls.

CHAPTER 19.

The Infamous Deed of the Men of Gibeah.

THE LEVITE AND HIS CONCUBINE. — V. 1. **And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel,** when so many things happened which would not have taken place if there had been some one to enforce law and order in Israel, **that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim,** living outside of a Levitical city, in the more distant parts of this range, **who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehem-judah,** a secondary wife in addition to his real wife, this in itself indicating a decay of the priesthood. V. 2. **And his concubine played the whore against him,** beyond him, she became unfaithful to the man whom she had willingly followed, **and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehem-**

judah, probably for fear of punishment, Deut. 22, 22, **and was there four whole months,** literally, some time, about four months. V. 3. **And her husband arose,** he set out from home, **and went after her, to speak friendly unto her,** to speak to her heart, to show her that he carried no grudge against her, **and to bring her again, having his servant with him and a couple of asses,** one for the woman to return on; **and she,** having permitted herself to be assured of his entire friendliness, **brought him into her father's house,** for only then would he accept his father-in-law's hospitality; **and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.** V. 4. **And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him,** kept him from returning home by the exercise of an uncommon, exaggerated hospitality which may have been prompted to some extent by a feeling of guilt for not having returned the Levite's concubine sooner; **and he abode with him three days; so they did eat and drink and lodged there.** V. 5. **And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart; and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread,** a true Oriental exaggeration of humility, for they were continually feasting, **and afterward go your way.** V. 6. **And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together,** the women not being permitted to eat together with the men; **for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee,** he asked that favor of him, **and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry.** V. 7. **And when the man rose up to depart,** with an uneasy feeling that he really ought to be at home, **his father-in-law urged him; therefore he lodged there again.** V. 8. **And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart; and the damsel's father,** still with the same excess of hospitality, **said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon,** literally, till the day declined, till past noon, **and they did eat, both of them.** V. 9. **And when the man rose up to depart, he and his concubine and his servant, his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening,** literally, the day sinks down, **I pray you tarry all night; behold, the day groweth to an end,** the pitching time of the day was near. **Lodge here that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow get you early on your way that thou mayest go home.** The Levite's experience was that of all weak and vacillating people: first, unnecessary delay and then overstrained hurry. V. 10. **But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem,** for the road from Bethlehem to the north passed by Jerusalem; **and there were with him two asses saddled; his concubine also was with him.** V. 11. **And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent,** it was late afternoon; **and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites,** for the city was still in the hands of the heathen at that time, **and lodge in it.** V. 12. **And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel,** for the Benjamites had not yet taken the city, chap. 1, 21, and he feared to be plundered by the Jebusites; **we will pass over to Gibeah,** about as far north of Jerusalem as Bethlehem was south. V. 13. **And he said unto his servant, Come and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah or in Ramah,** another town near by. V. 14. **And they passed on and went their way,** having still some six or eight miles to travel. **And the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin.** V. 15. **And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah; and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city,** in the open place or square of the city, where they expected some resident of the city to invite them into his house, according to ancient usage; **for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging,** no one invited the traveler to the shelter of his roof. V. 16. **And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of Mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah,** he was not a citizen of the town; **but the men of the place were Benjamites.** V. 17. **And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city,** feeling the lack of hospitality in this city of Israel; **and the old man,** mindful of the love toward the stranger enjoined in the Law, Deut. 10, 19, **said, Whither goest thou? And whence camest thou?** This was said, either in true hospitable interest, or in surprise that a man should not have heard of the inhospitable disposition of this town. V. 18. **And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehem-judah toward the side of Mount Ephraim; from thence am I; and I went to Bethlehem-judah. But I am now going to the house of the Lord,** that is, his walk in life, his occupation was at the house of Jehovah, the Levite thus mentioning his order; **and there is no man that receiveth me to house,** probably because they knew his occupation and were hostile to everything that reminded them of the true religion and of purity of life. V. 19. **Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants; there is**

no want of anything; they were not looking for charity, but only for shelter for the night. V. 20. **And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me,** he would care for all the needs of the travelers; **only lodge not in the street.** V. 21. **So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses; and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink,** enjoying the hospitality of the old man. True hospitality is a virtue which cannot be practised too often, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares, Heb. 13, 2.

THE SHAMEFUL ACT OF THE MEN OF GIBEAH. V. 22. **Now, as they were making their hearts merry,** as they became better acquainted during the evening meal, **behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial,** worthless, profitless, vicious fools, among whom, apparently, were also the leaders of the city, **beset the house round about,** to prevent escape, **and beat at the door,** becoming more insistent right along, **and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house that we may know him.** They wanted to commit the same revolting crime of Sodomy or pederasty upon the Levite which had brought destruction upon Sodom, Gen. 19, 6—8. V. 23. **And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them,** as Lot had done in the same situation, **and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house,** being protected by the ancient rules of hospitality, **do not this folly.** V. 24. **Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them,** in making them objects of their lust, **and do with them what seemeth good unto you; but unto this man do not so vile a thing,** in committing an act of infamous immorality. V. 25. **But the men would not hearken to him,** for even ordinary fornication did not satisfy their depraved desires; **so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them,** hoping thereby to save himself, to prevent one sin by committing another; **and they,** turning their wantonness upon the woman, since no other victim seemed available, **knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning,** in an orgy of devilish lust; **and when the day began to spring,** at the first dawn of morning, **they let her go.** V. 26. **Then came the woman in the dawning of the day,** just as it was getting light, **and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord,** her husband, **was, till it was light,** deprived of her life by the beastly treatment accorded her by the mob. V. 27. **And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way,** considering the idea of ever recovering his concubine as being utterly hopeless in this den of iniquity; **and, behold, the woman, his concubine, was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold,** her arms stretched out, as though seeking help. V. 28. **And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered.** His wife was dead. **Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up and gat him unto his place.** V. 29. **And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones,** divided after the manner of slaughtered animals, **into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel,** messengers going forth to explain the meaning of their gruesome burden, according to an ancient custom of inviting men to join in wreaking vengeance upon the perpetrators of such a beastly act. V. 30. **And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day. Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds;** they were to think over the case, to take counsel one with another, and get ready to act in the matter, for it was out of the question that such a horrible deed should go unpunished. That is the result when men forget and forsake the living God — every form of uncleanness and immorality, the most unnatural horrors: Let the heart of every man be firm in the fear of the Lord, lest he take part in deeds of darkness and become a slave of the Prince of Darkness.

CHAPTER 20.

War of the Other Tribes against Benjamin.

THE BENJAMITES REFUSE TO DELIVER UP THE GUILTY. — V. 1. **Then all the children of Israel went out,** all housefathers or able-bodied men leaving their homes, **and the congregation was gathered together as one man,** they assembled as a congregation, with the full consciousness of organic union, **from Dan,** the most northern town, **even to Beersheba,** the most southern city, the expression thus denoting a most general participation of the men of Israel, **with the land of Gilead,** the country east of Jordan, **unto the Lord,** with the Lord's approval, knowing that their assembly was well-pleasing to Him, **in Mizpeh,** near the western boundary of Benjamin. V. 2. **And the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of**

God, all the officers of the civic organization, of the government, heads of a community of warriors, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. That was the strength of the army of Israel at that time. V. 3. (Now, the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) They knew of the meeting, had probably been invited to attend, but neither sent representatives, nor did they give any token of horror or indignation over the infamous deed committed in their midst. Then said the children of Israel, in an effort to determine the facts of the case, Tell us, how was this wickedness? The question was directed to the entire assembly, every one who knew anything of the matter being requested to give the information which he possessed. V. 4. And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, at whose instigation the assembly had convened, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. V. 5. And the men of Gibeah, the lords of the city, for they were guilty with their whole city, since they had not prevented the excess, rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me. The crime which the men of Gibeah had intended was really worse than murder, and it would probably have resulted in the Levite's death; he may have been ashamed to speak of the crime by its right name. And my concubine have they forced that she is dead, a victim of their bestial lusts. V. 6. And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel; for they have committed lewdness, a most unnatural immoral deed, and folly in Israel, a most revolting wickedness, a crime against the entire people. V. 7. Behold, ye are all children of Israel, familiar with the Lord's condemnation of such wickedness; give here your advice and counsel, they should decide upon a course of action after having passed sentence upon the guilty. V. 8. And all the people arose as one man, with energetic unanimity, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent, return home, neither will we any of us turn into his house, for even a short stay, until this crime had been avenged. V. 9. But now, this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah: we will go up by lot against it, in such a manner that the lot should decide which warriors should be actively engaged in the expedition; v. 10. and we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel and an hundred of a thousand and a thousand out of ten thousand, ten per cent. of the entire army, to fetch victual for the people, to provide food and equipment for the expedition, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel, punishing them in the measure which they deserved for their crime. V. 11. So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together, a unit in fellowship, as one man, firmly resolved to see this thing through to an end which would please Jehovah and remove the stain from Israel. V. 12. And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe, the families of the tribe, of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you? V. 13. Now, therefore, deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. By the punishment of the criminals, delivered up to justice by the Benjamites, the requirements of the Law would have been satisfied, and Benjamin itself would have been vindicated. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel, thus becoming partakers in the sin of the citizens of Gibeah. Israel here proved itself to be a congregation of the Lord, in letting itself be ruled and directed by the Lord's Word and will. A true congregation will be zealous for the name and honor of God, also by fighting against all sinful acts and by removing the leaven of wickedness and uncleanness from its midst.

The Reverses of Israel. — V. 14. But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities, namely, those of the entire tribe, unto Gibeah, thus placing themselves under the leadership of its wicked chiefs, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. V. 15. And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities, out of their entire territory, twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, able-bodied warriors, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. V. 16. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men left-handed, literally, "deprived of the use of their right hand"; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. Since the Benjamites at first took up their stand on the heights, these skilful slingers were of special value to them in repelling the attacks of the Israelites. V. 17. And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, with the exception of this one tribe, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword; all these were men of war. V. 18. And the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God, to Bethel, where the ark had probably been brought for the duration of this expedition, and asked counsel of God, through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first, to

fight in the vanguard of the army, to open the battle, as the champion of the nation. V. 19. **And the children of Israel rose up in the morning and encamped against Gibeah,** they set themselves in battle array. V. 20. **And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah.** V. 21. **And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah,** in a sudden, desperate thrust, **and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day,** both by slaying and by disabling, **twenty and two thousand men.** It was a case of overconfidence, of self-righteous assurance on the part of Israel. V. 22. **And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves,** they invested themselves with new strength, **and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day,** anxious to wipe out the disgrace of the first defeat. V. 23. **(And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even,** truly sorrowful over their display of sinful self-confidence, **and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother?** The question implies some doubts concerning the justice of their cause. **And the Lord said, Go up against him.)** V. 24. **And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day,** they advanced in a rapid attack. V. 25. **And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again,** by slaying, wounding, and disabling **eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword,** the tenth part of their army had thus been slaughtered or put out of commission. V. 26. **Then all the children of Israel,** the soldiers, **and all the people,** the non-combatants that had come along with the army, **went up, and came unto the house of God,** apparently again to Bethel, **and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until evening,** in deep sorrow over their own sins, for they felt that these defeats were placed upon them in the nature of a chastisement, in order to teach them humility and trust in God alone, **and offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord,** sacrifices intended to plead for God's merciful assistance. V. 27. **And the children of Israel enquired of the Lord, (for the Ark of the Covenant of God was there in those days,** v. 28. **and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,** so these events happened not long after the death of Joshua,) **saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord,** whose object of teaching the Israelites repentance and humility had been attained, **said, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.** This was not a mere permission, but a definite command, with a promise attached to it. Chastisements, such as the Lord laid upon Israel in this instance, are always beneficial to His children, for they make them realize their absolute dependence upon God and remind them of their many lapses in faithfulness and obedience toward Jehovah.

THE BENJAMITES DEFEATED AND ALMOST EXTERMINATED. — V. 29. **And Israel set liers-in-wait round about Gibeah;** they no longer relied upon superior force, but made use of strategic arts in placing various details of soldiers in ambush. V. 30. **And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day,** moving forward to attack the city, **and put themselves in array against Gibeah as at other times.** V. 31. **And the children of Benjamin,** in total ignorance of the ambush in their rear, **went out against the people, and were drawn away,** torn away, severed, **from the city; and they began to smite of the people and kill,** to wound, disable, and slay, **as at other times, in the highways,** at the intersection of two roads, **of which one goeth up to the house of God,** to Bethel, **and the other to Gibeah in the field,** to the fields near the city, **about thirty men of Israel.** V. 32. **And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us,** as at the first. **But the children of Israel,** relying upon their ambuscade, **said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways,** as just related. V. 33. **And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place,** they relinquished their advanced position, **and put themselves in array,** forming a new line of battle, **at Baal-tamar** (place of palms); **and the liers-in-wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah,** a slope near the city denuded of forest growth, but probably covered with bushes which offered sufficient shelter to the men in ambush. V. 34. **And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel,** that being the sum total of the men who had been placed in ambush, **and the battle was sore; but they,** the Benjamites, **knew not that evil was near them,** that misfortune had overtaken them. V. 35. **And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel,** this fact being brought out here with great emphasis; **and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men; all these drew the sword.** V. 36. **So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten,** they had thought, when they rushed forward to attack the invading army that the Israelites were once more overcome; **for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the**

liers-in-wait, which they had set beside Gibeah. V. 37. And the liers-in-wait hasted and rushed upon Gibeah, all these details being added here in a description of the battle; and the liers-in-wait drew themselves along, they moved forward steadily, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. V. 38. Now there was an appointed sign, one which both the attacking party and the ambush had agreed upon, between the men of Israel and the liers-in-wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke, a mighty pillar which could not be overlooked, rise up out of the city. V. 39. And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons, as related above, v. 31; for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us as in the first battle. V. 40. But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the whole city, apparently, gong up in smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven, literally, "there went up the whole of the city heavenward." V. 41. And when the men of Israel turned again, making a sudden firm stand after their apparent flight, the men of Benjamin were amazed, filled with terror; for they saw that evil was come upon them. V. 42. Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness, trying to escape toward the northeast; but the battle overtook them; and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them, literally, "and they out of the cities destroyed them in their midst," that is, wherever the fugitives came, the inhabitants of the cities fell upon them and slew them, for the feeling against Benjamin was bitter everywhere. V. 43. Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, completely surrounding them, and chased them, and trode them down with ease, or, from Menuchah, over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising. V. 44. And there fell of Benjamin, in this part of the battle, eighteen thousand men; all these were men of valor. V. 45. And they turned, trying to escape in another direction, and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon, about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem; and they, the Israelites, gleaned of them, killed in this running skirmish after the main battle, in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, in the direction toward Rimmon, and slew two thousand men of them. V. 46. So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these were men of valor. This is a round number, the exact number included one hundred men more, v. 35. In addition, there were evidently a thousand men who had fallen in the first battles, making the total of the slain Benjamites twenty-six thousand and one hundred. V. 47. But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, they effected their escape and fortified themselves in the fastnesses of this rocky wilderness, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. V. 48. And the men of Israel, in a fury which knew no mercy, turned again upon the children of Benjamin, on the defenseless part of the population, old people, women, and children, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city as the beast, and all that came to hand, whatever living thing they happened to strike; also they set on fire all the cities that they came to. It was a campaign of extermination much more savage than any undertaken against any of the heathen nations. But it was the punishment of God upon the tribe which had taken the part of the criminals of Gibeah; for the holiness of God cannot bear the abominations of the heathen in the midst of His people. All those who know His command and truth, and still persist in doing according to the manner of the heathen, should be excluded from the company of the believers, eventually to be punished by the wrath of Him who is a jealous God.

CHAPTER 21.

The Tribe of Benjamin Rebuilt.

THE EXPEDITION AGAINST JABESH-GILEAD. — V. 1. Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, at the time of the great assembly, chap. 20, 1, when the embittered feeling against Benjamin ran high, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin, to any member of that tribe, to wife, man for man they had promised that. V. 2. And the people, after the close of the war of vengeance, came to the house of God, to Bethel, where the Ark of the Covenant remained till the end of the campaign, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore, realizing the extent of their passionate outburst and its effects, for it had been to punish the guilty, not to destroy a tribe, that Israel had taken the field; v. 3. and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel? The fierceness of civil war had had its usual consequences, but the complaint of the people included, at the same time, the prayer

that God might show them ways and means of averting the entire destruction of the tribe of Benjamin. V. 4. **And it came to pass on the morrow that the people rose early, and built there an altar,** large enough for their purpose, **and offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings,** for they realized that the plans which they had could not be realized without a full reconciliation with the Lord, which meant, of course, a full return to the fellowship of His mercy. V. 5. **And the children of Israel said,** realizing that there might be a way out of their difficulty, **Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord,** to take part in this campaign of vengeance? **For they had made a great oath,** which included the threat of death upon every one that did not appear, **concerning him that came not up to the Lord at Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death.** V. 6. **And the children of Israel** (had) **repented them,** they had been filled with deep sympathy and care for the rebuilding of the tribe of Benjamin, **for Benjamin, their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.** V. 7. **How shall we do for wives for them that remain,** whence and how could wives be provided for them, **seeing we have sworn by the Lord that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?** These two factors, that of the oath and that of the possible non-appearance of some part of the tribes, having been set forth, the author continues his narrative. V. 8. **And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that come not up to Mizpeh to the Lord? And,** behold, when they made careful inquiry, a thing which they had neglected to do in their first indignation and zeal, **there came,** had come, **none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead,** a city of the valley east of Jordan, about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, **to the assembly.** V. 9. **For the people were numbered,** to make sure that this report was true, **and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there.** V. 10. **And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest,** especially renowned among men known for their valor, **and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword,** as a punishment for their neglect in joining the congregation of the Lord in this important enterprise, **with the women and the children.** V. 11. **And this is the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man,** in carnal intercourse. V. 12. **And they,** the men of the expedition, **found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male; and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh,** where it had been removed, **now that the campaign had been brought to a close, which is in the land of Canaan,** to distinguish it from Jabesh in Gilead. V. 13. **And the whole congregation sent some,** envoys, **to speak to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them,** to assure them of their peaceful intentions. V. 14. **And Benjamin came again at that time,** the six hundred men that had escaped returned to the land of their inheritance; **and they,** the congregation **gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead,** the four hundred virgins; **and yet so they sufficed them not,** for there were still two hundred men to be supplied. One step had been taken for the restoration of the tribe, but there was still more to be done.

WIVES FOR THE REMAINING BENJAMITES FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF SHILOH. — V. 15. **And the people repented them,** they were again filled with anxious care, **for Benjamin, because that the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel,** since this one tribe had been almost exterminated. V. 16. **Then the elders of the congregation said,** in discussing other possibilities of securing wives for the remaining Benjamites, **How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?** So far as the members of their tribe were concerned, there were no women for them. V. 17. **And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin,** ways and means had to be found to that end, **that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel.** V. 18. **Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters; for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.** V. 19. **Then they said,** as an expedient was finally suggested to them, **Behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly,** year after year, **in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem and on the south of Lebonah,** this detailed description being added for the sake of the Benjamites, who might thus reach the designated locality without attracting attention. V. 20. **Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards;** v. 21. **and see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances,** at the designated time, probably the festival of the Passover, **then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh,** the virgin which he intended to make his wife, **and go to the land of Benjamin.** V. 22. **And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain,** to make this robbery of the virgins a court case, **that we will say unto them, Be**

favorable unto them for our sakes, because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war; for ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty. This has been transcribed as follows: "Be quiet and gentle; give the maidens kindly to us. You know that we did not take them in war, as booty, as, for instance, at Jabesh. We have indeed allowed them to be taken (for which no grudge is to be held against Benjamin); but in peace, not for injury; and as you did not give them, no guilt attaches to you." (Lange.) V. 23. **And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught,** a total of two hundred virgins; **and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities,** which had been burned down, **and dwelt in them.** V. 24. **And the children of Israel,** all those who had been engaged in the campaign of punishment against Benjamin, **departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.** V. 25. **In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes,** a notice once more inserted by the author, in order to intimate that such things would probably not have happened if there had been a strong central government dispensing justice in the entire nation. Just as the congregation of Israel accepted the remaining Benjamites after they had been punished and acknowledged their wrong, so a Christian congregation will remit the sins of the penitent sinners when they apply for readmission to the Lord's assembly.

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

INTRODUCTION.

This short book, "the idyl of David's great-grandmother," tells the charming story of Ruth the Moabitess, who lived in the days when the Judges ruled in Israel, a more exact fixing of the time being almost impossible. "One of the sweetest stories in the Bible, showing that even in the blackest period God has men and women who love and serve Him. In Boaz we have the model rich man of his age; every act and word shows his deep faith in God. In Ruth we have an example of modesty and patience, coupled with a remarkable belief in the true God. In Naomi we have a specimen of a good woman, whose religion shows itself in fidelity to all her duties." (Sell.) "One chief purpose of the book seems to be the tracing of the genealogy of David to the Moabitess Ruth, whose name it bears." (Robertson.) "This information gains in significance if we remember that the genealogy of David is at the same time that of Jesus Christ. The story therefore goes to show how Ruth the Moabitess, by birth an alien to Israel, was chosen to become an ancestress of the Savior. Her reception into the communion of Israel also testified to the fact that even in the days before Christ Gentiles might be admitted to the kingdom of God if only they received the promises of the covenant in true faith. — As the genealogy here recorded ends with David's name, it is improbable that the book should have been written before David had become a person of influence and renown among the people of the covenant. We find an additional reason for this assumption in chap. 4, 7, where the author explains a peculiar custom, which had fallen into disuse in his days. — The author remains unknown to us; but it has been suggested that David himself might well have penned this account of a significant episode in his family history," and the record concerning Christ's ancestors was thus completed.

CHAPTER 1.

Ruth Accompanies Naomi to Bethlehem.

ELIMELECH AND NAOMI IN THE COUNTRY OF MOAB. — V. 1. **Now, it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled,** some hundred and fifty years before the reign of David, **that there was a famine in the land,** an affliction threatened by the Lord, Deut. 28, 22—24, and sent from time to time as a punishment of Israel's iniquity in committing idolatry. **And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah,** the town afterward famous as the birthplace of our Lord, **went to sojourn,** to live as an alien, **in the country of Moab,** literally, "in the fields"; for the entire territory was conceived to have been divided into fields for agricultural purposes, **he, and his wife, and his two sons.** It may well have been that importations of grain from Egypt were cut off by the hostility of the Philistines, and that the inhabitants of Judah, therefore, were almost obliged to turn to the country east of the Dead Sea, although the Moabites belonged to

the ancient enemies of Israel. V. 2. **And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah,** natives of the region, Ephratah being the ancient name of the city and its vicinity. **And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there,** they were there for some time. V. 3. **And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left and her two sons.** The first affliction which befell her was that her husband died in the strange country. V. 4. **And they took them wives of the women of Moab,** an act surely not in conformity with Deut. 23, 3. 4, although the Moabites are not expressly mentioned Deut. 7, 3; **the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelled there about ten years;** that was the total length of the sojourn of Naomi. Although the sojourn of this Jewish family in the Moabite country did not prove productive of the blessings which they had anticipated, as the undertaking evidently was not in accordance with the will of God, yet the result was one highly beneficial to at least one of the Moabite women, so that, by God's merciful kindness, it served a great end. V. 5. **And Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them,** Naomi thus having neither husband, sons, nor property, nor were there grandchildren. **And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.** Thus God often lays a cross upon His children and chastises them severely, in order to bind them more securely to Himself.

THE RETURN OF NAOMI WITH RUTH. — V. 6. **Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab,** for it was understood that the younger women were merely to accompany her for some distance, perhaps to the boundary of the country; **for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited His people,** in mercy, **in giving them bread,** in delivering them from the ravages of the famine. V. 7. **Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was,** where she had been an alien, where she had not been at home, **and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah,** they took the road leading to Canaan. V. 8. **And Naomi said unto her daughters-in-law,** after they had traversed some distance, **Go, return each to her mother's house,** the usual place of refuge for young widows; **the Lord deal kindly with you,** in showng them merciful kindness, **as ye have dealt with the dead and with me.** The relation of these former heathen women, not only toward their husbands, but also toward their mother-in-law had been one of the most tender affection and service, a model, in this respect, to this very day and hour. V. 9. **The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, quiet and safe happiness, an asylum of honor and freedom, each of you in the house of her husband,** in a second happy marriage. **Then she kissed them,** as the signal of parting; **and they lifted up their voice and wept,** unwilling to leave Naomi, whom they had learned to love so dearly. V. 10. **And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.** They found the parting so hard that they preferred to stay with Naomi on her solitary walk through life. V. 11. **And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me?** It was her great love for them which prompted her to deter them, if possible. **Are there yet any more sons in my womb that they may be your husbands?** She was not pregnant with possible sons, who would then be able to perform the duty of levirs toward Ruth and Orpah, Deut. 25, 5; Gen. 38, 8. V. 12. **Turn again, my daughters, go your way;** her love was great enough to bear the sacrifice of their parting with her, since she had only their happiness in mind; **for I am too old to have an husband,** she was past the age when the normal consequence of marriage might be expected. **If I should say, I have hope,** if she should expect the apparently impossible to happen, **if I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons,** v. 13. **would ye tarry for them,** hope to be married to them, **till they were grown? Would ye stay for them from having husbands?** Should they let this very uncertain possibility keep them from becoming happily married in their own country? **Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes,** that was the bitterest drop in her cup of sorrow, **that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me,** in taking both her husband and her sons. She did not even mention another possibility, namely, that of a marriage in the land of Judah, for her delicacy kept her from mentioning what would probably prove a disappointment, since the sentiment in Israel was strongly against marriages also with Moabites, Deut. 7, 3. 4. V. 14. **And they lifted up their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law,** convinced that the way pointed out by her was the best; **but Ruth clave unto her,** clinging to her all the more closely now that Orpah was leaving. V. 15. **And she, Naomi, said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods,** for the one implied the other; **return thou after thy sister-in-law.** Naomi's love for Ruth was so great that she desired her earthly welfare even at the sacrifice of her company. V. 16. **And Ruth said,** as the climax of a scene of wonderful delicacy and unequaled tenderness, in a rivalry of affection which is without a parallel in human annals, **Intreat me not to leave thee or to**

return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; v. 17. **where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.** She will not be swerved from her intention to cast her lot with that of Naomi. It was not the affection of a daughter to her natural mother nor that of a wife to the husband of her choice, but it was her love toward Naomi which had knit their hearts together. And the highest stage of the devotion which she yielded to Naomi for life was reached in the confession that she had found the God of Israel to be the true God, a fact which implied the highest unity of spirit. **The Lord,** Jehovah, **do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.** It was an oath inviting the severest penalty on the part of Jehovah if Ruth should prove fickle in her affection and devotion. V. 18. **When she,** Naomi, **saw that she was steadfastly minded,** that her resolution was unshakable, **to go with her, then she left speaking unto her,** she no longer attempted to dissuade her. V. 19. **So they two went until they came to Bethlehem,** the end of their journey. **And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them,** there was great excitement on account of their return, **and they,** chiefly the women, **said, Is this Naomi?** It was not a cry of surprise over the fact that she was still alive, but rather an expression of sympathy that she had returned bereft of both husband and sons. V. 20. **And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi** (lovely, gracious), **call me Mara** (bitter); **for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me,** He had inflicted sorrow upon her, as her obvious bereavement showed; the God of fruitfulness and life had withheld His blessings from her. V. 21. **I went out full,** rich, as a wife and mother, **and the Lord hath brought me home again empty,** with neither husband nor sons; **why, then, call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me,** had declared Himself her opponent by depriving her of her loved ones, **and the Almighty hath afflicted me?** God had made sorrow her portion, to teach her to trust in Him all the more implicitly. V. 22. **So Naomi returned,** such was the nature of her return to the city of her fathers, **and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab.** The curiosity of the Bethlehemites was satisfied, and their interest soon died down, since Naomi had sunk into poverty and no longer could take her place with the influential people of the town; but Ruth remained faithful, standing by her mother-in-law in her misery. **And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest,** about the latter part of March or the beginning of April, fortunate for them, since they were now dependent upon the portion of the poor to get a livelihood, Lev. 19, 9. 10; 23, 22. Thus Ruth, in denying herself the advantages which she might have had in her home country, became a partaker of the blessings of the true God. Whenever we are placed before a decision such as she made, the way which points to the service and worship of the true God must be our choice without hesitation, for in Him we find the eternal blessings of His mercy.

CHAPTER 2.

Ruth the Gleaner.

IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ. — V. 1. **And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's,** a relative by marriage, according to Jewish tradition a nephew of Elimelech, **a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.** His ability and influence were freely recognized in the community, both in war and peace. V. 2. **And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn,** of grain, **after him in whose sight I shall find grace.** That was a privilege granted to the very poor, to widows and orphans by the precepts of Moses, Lev. 23, 22; Deut. 24, 19, but it must have been a rather bitter experience to one unaccustomed to charity, especially since the permission was not always given in good grace by the harvesters. But Ruth's love for Naomi was sincere and faithful; she was ready to brave the ordeal. **And she,** Naomi, **said unto her, Go, my daughter,** for she was now utterly dependent upon the efforts of her daughter-in-law. V. 3. **And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers,** gathering up the ears that fell aside when the harvesters bound up the sheaves; **and her hap was,** it was a providential happening for her, **to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.** Unacquainted with the neighborhood as she was, she simply turned her footsteps to the first field she struck, but God guided her in her selection. V. 4. **And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem,** to oversee the harvesting, **and said unto the reapers,** in a greeting which might be copied oftener, **The Lord be with you! And they,** as the laudable custom of the country required, **answered him, The Lord bless thee!** If the excellent relationship between employers and employees which this exchange of greetings implied obtained everywhere, there would be no need of arbitration committees between capital

and labor. V. 5. **Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers,** the foreman of the harvesters, **Whose damsel is this?** Being familiar with all the families in the entire neighborhood, he wanted to know to which of these she belonged. V. 6. **And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab;** v. 7. **and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves; so she came and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house,** she had not even taken time to rest, so busy had she been. So the overseer praised both the humility and the diligence of Ruth, including the propriety and the reserve of her demeanor. It appears, then, that Boaz freely permitted the poor to glean on his fields, and that his overseer had taken his cue from his master, feeling very kindly disposed toward those in need, especially if they were, as in this case, humble and respectful. V. 8. **Then said Boaz unto Ruth,** on the strength of the fine testimonial given her by the overseer, **Hearest thou not, my daughter?** He wanted to be sure that she followed his kind directions without hesitation. **Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence,** for she modestly stayed at a distance from the reapers and binders, **but abide here fast by my maidens,** the women-servants who bound up the cut grain in sheaves; v. 9. **let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap,** right behind the binders, where the gleaning would be most productive, **and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?** For they may occasionally have indulged in some rudeness toward the poor gleaners. **And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels,** placed there for the use of the workmen, **and drink of that which the young men have drawn.** Although Boaz was undoubtedly aware of a certain relationship between himself and this poor woman, he practises no condescension, he assumes no patronizing air, but protects her interests in a manner which would not hurt. V. 10. **Then she fell on her face,** bowing down deeply, so as to touch the ground with her forehead, in recognition of his kindness, **and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldest take knowledge of me,** notice her at all, **seeing I am a stranger?** She felt unworthy of the kind interest which he was showing in her, especially since she was not even a member of the people of Israel. V. 11. **And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath been fully showed me,** he had been given full information, **all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.** She had had a home and parents living as well, all that she needed for earthly happiness; but all this she had left for an unknown country, with people that were strangers to her. It was not only devotion to her mother-in-law, as Boaz very well knew, but faith in the God of Israel which had determined Ruth's course. V. 12. **The Lord,** whom Ruth had chosen as her God, **recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust,** to take refuge. The words of Boaz reveal the truly pious mind of this chief among his brethren. He looks to Jehovah to reward Ruth as richly and abundantly as her love and its expression merited, so that she would miss nothing of that which she had left behind in the line of earthly blessings, but recover them all and more. "In his words there is undeniably the breathing of a pious, national consciousness, such as becomes an Israelitish family-head and hero in the presence of a recent proselyte to his faith and people." V. 13. **Then she said,** with the same modesty which characterized her behavior throughout, **Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly,** literally, "to the heart," **unto thine handmaid, though,** as she adds in restriction of her apparent boldness in daring to place herself on a level with his servants, **I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens,** not in that relationship of service to him that she might have earned his kind regard. V. 14. **And Boaz,** still more favorably disposed toward her on account of her humility, **said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar,** the food which was supplied to the laborers, bread and roasted grain or parched corn, the former being dipped into a refreshing drink, consisting of vinegar and water, perhaps with a little olive oil. **And she sat beside the reapers; and he,** partaking himself of the simple meal, **reached her parched corn,** grain roasted in the ear, **and she did eat, and was sufficed,** she had her fill, **and left,** the uneaten quantity being carefully saved for her mother-in-law. V. 15. **And when she was risen up to glean,** even before the others returned to work, **Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves,** not only at a distance in the rear, **and reproach her not,** not in any way interfere with her or heap shame upon her; v. 16. **and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her,** purposely pulling out some stalks from the bound sheaves, **and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not,** by speaking harshly to her. V. 17. **So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had**

gleaned, separating the kernels from the husks; **and it was about an ephah of barley,** over three pecks, a considerable amount for a mere gleaner. God rewards faithfulness in the performance of the duties of life in rich measure, even here in time.

THE PLEASURE OF NAOMI. — V. 18. **And she took it up and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. And she brought forth,** from a pocket or from a special package, **and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed,** the amount of roasted grain which she had saved from her plentiful meal in the field. V. 19. **And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day, and where wroughtest thou?** This was a question of astonishment at the large quantity brought home by Ruth, for gleaners usually got very little. **Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee,** showed her a friendly interest. Whosoever treated Ruth thus kindly and loaded her with presents must have intended to show his appreciation of her position and of her virtues. **And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought,** in whose field she had been busy all day, **and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.** V. 20. **And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead.** Through the kindness of Boaz, God was showing mercy not only to the living, Naomi and Ruth, but also to the dead, namely, by providing so richly for the two widows. Naomi recognized God's hand to an extent which made her feel that this would not be the end of the interest which Boaz had taken in Ruth. Cp. Gen. 24, 27. **And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen,** one of those who had the right to redeem the land belonging to Elimelech by marrying the widow of his son. Cp. Lev. 25, 25. V. 21. **And Ruth the Moabitess,** without paying any attention to the hint in Naomi's words, which she probably did not understand at the time, **said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men until they have ended all my harvest.** This permission to keep with the laborers of Boaz till the end of harvest safeguarded Ruth against rude treatment. V. 22. **And Naomi said unto Ruth, her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens,** where safety was now assured, **that they meet thee not in any other field,** namely, that she might not be fallen upon and abused in other fields, where she was not protected in this manner. V. 23. **So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest and of wheat-harvest,** well through the first part of summer; **and dwelt with her mother-in-law,** always returning there when she came from gleaning in the evening. Her diligence did not relax, nor did she change her behavior on account of the favors shown her; she was as modest and unassuming as ever, her gentle and virtuous conduct being obvious to all. All such virtues, both those shown by Boaz and those found in Ruth, are fruits of true faith.

CHAPTER 3.

Naomi Arranges for Ruth's Marriage.

RUTH LAYS THE MATTER OF REDEMPTION BEFORE BOAZ. — V. 1. **Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee,** a resting-place in the home of a husband, happily married, **that it may be well with thee?** Naomi's former hopeless sorrow had given way to the joyful hope that Boaz, as a near relative, having taken an obvious interest in Ruth, would be willing to take upon himself the duty of redeeming her property, which she had been obliged to sell and at the same time, as the levir in the case, to enter into marriage with Ruth, Deut. 25, 5. For it was a custom in Israel that, if the dead husband had no brethren to undertake this duty, the nearest male relative would do so, thus keeping the inheritance in the family through the children of such a union. It was the woman's right to ask this duty of the relative concerned, and, far from being considered indelicate, she had a right openly to put him to shame in case of his refusal. These facts must be borne in mind in order to understand the mission of Ruth in this chapter, for otherwise her behavior may seem rather strange to modern ways of thinking. V. 2. **And now,** so Naomi continues, **is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast?** It was in favor of Naomi's scheme that Boaz had not slighted her on account of her nationality, but placed her on an equality with his Israelitish workpeople. **Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing-floor,** this work being done in the evening, after the threshing had been done by the oxen during the day, by stepping out the kernels from the husks, as the stalks of grain were scattered upon the threshing-floor. V. 3. **Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee,** paying special attention to the adornment of her person, which she had probably neglected during her widowhood, **and get thee down to the floor; but make not thyself known unto the man until he shall have done eating and drinking,** she was not to let herself be seen until he had partaken of

his late supper, which would probably put him into a humor to give more favorable attention to her proposition. V. 4. **And it shall be when he lieth down,** for it was the custom for the master to remain on the threshing-floor all night, **that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet,** removing the clothes or blankets lying at his feet, **and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.** V. 5. **And she said unto her,** with the same respectful submission which had always characterized her relation toward her mother-in-law, **All that thou sayest unto me I will do.** V. 6. **And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her,** especially as to keeping out of sight as long as there were other people near, lest they suspect both Boaz and her of unpermitted relations, of a clandestine meeting with impure purposes. V. 7. **And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry,** cheerful at the prospect of a rich return for his labor, **he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn,** of the barley stacked in sheaves at the end of the threshing-floor; **and she came softly,** so quietly, in fact, as not to disturb the deep slumber into which he had immediately fallen, **and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.** V. 8. **And it came to pass at midnight,** when the first phase of deepest slumber was past, **that the man was afraid,** startled out of his sleep, perhaps by having his foot come in contact with the person of Ruth, **and turned himself,** bending forward in order to see what he was touching; **and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.** V. 9. **And he said, Who art thou?** And she **answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid; spread, therefore, thy skirt over thine handmaid,** a proverbial expression by which she reminded him of the duty of marriage, in case he would consider the proposition, Deut. 23, 1; **for thou art a near kinsman,** one of those in the near relationship that had the right to redeem, namely, by repurchasing the field sold by Naomi, which included the marrying of Ruth, the widow of the rightful heir of Elimelech. Ruth did not deviate in the least from the strict path of virtue, and she had faith in Boaz, as a man of nobility and honor, that he would not take advantage of the situation.

BOAZ PROMISES FAVORABLE ACTION. — V. 10. **And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter; for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.** She had at first, when she might have stayed in her own country and married among her own people, preferred to accompany her mother-in-law into a strange land, with no other prospect than that of sharing poverty, misery, and humiliation with her. **And she had now,** instead of setting her cap for some attractive young man, as would have been natural for a woman of her age, shown her obedient disposition toward Naomi in proposing marriage to him, as the levir relative, although he was advanced in life. V. 11. **And now, my daughter, fear not,** she was to lay aside all anxiety and worry, which probably showed itself in the tremulous tones with which she made her request; **I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people,** "literally, the whole gate," standing for all the inhabitants of Bethlehem and the surrounding country, **doth know that thou art a virtuous woman,** she had proved to all that she was a good woman, with no loose morals such as were ascribed to the women of Moab. V. 12. **And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I,** this restriction being added by Boaz on account of possible legal complications. V. 13. **Tarry this night,** he would not think of sending her away in the dense darkness, **and it shall be in the morning that, if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part,** in redeeming the land and marrying Ruth; **but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth,** he would cheerfully perform the duty, as he confirmed with a solemn oath. **Lie down until the morning.** There is not an unseemly hint in the entire passage, only naturalness and simplicity and virtue. V. 14. **And she lay at his feet until the morning; and she rose up before one could know another,** before the light made it possible to recognize people clearly. **And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.** He wanted to protect, not only his own good name, but that of Ruth as well, particularly since there was still a possibility that the nearer relative might claim her as his wife, and scandalous rumors might have resulted most unpleasantly. V. 15. **Also he said, Bring the veil,** the cloak or shawl which she had about her, **that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley,** a large quantity, **and laid it on her,** as a gift showing his good will. **And she went into the city.** V. 16. **And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter?** It was an inquiry concerning the success which she had had, whether her claim had been acknowledged or otherwise. **And she told her all that the man had done to her,** the gift, of course, being a strong hint to Naomi of the result of Ruth's application. V. 17. **And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy**

mother-in-law, visitors usually being dismissed with gifts for their families. V. 18. **Then said she, Naomi, Sit still, my daughter,** she was to remain quietly at home, **until thou know how the matter will fall,** what the outcome of the business would be; **for the man, Boaz, will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day.** He was an energetic man, who always went forward toward the goal with open directness. All the virtues which we here find in him and in Ruth, purity, chastity, openness, generosity, a strict regard for the rights of the neighbor, are fruits of faith.

CHAPTER 4.

The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth.

The Nearer Relative Declines to Act. — V. 1. **Then went Boaz up to the gate and sat him down there,** he went early since he wanted to be sure of finding the man for whom he was looking, and the space just inside the city gate was used for the transaction of judicial business, as well as for the marketplace; **and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake,** namely, in his talking to Ruth, chap. 3, 12. 13, **came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here,** the legal formula for summoning a person when seeking a judicial decision. **And he turned aside, and sat down.** V. 2. **And he,** Boaz, **took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here,** this being the customary complement of witnesses. **And they sat down.** V. 3. **And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's,** she had disposed of this piece of land, the family inheritance. "The name of Elimelech was still on the property; consequently the law demanded its redemption, and directed this demand to the nearest blood-relative. It is on the basis of this prescription that Boaz begins his negotiation with the unnamed kinsman, in the interest of Naomi." (Lange.) V. 4. **And I thought to advertise thee,** literally, uncover thy ear, to inform him solemnly and officially, **saying, Buy it before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people,** the men sitting by acting as witnesses of the transaction. **If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee.** Boaz came only in second place in the right to purchase the field according to law. While reminding the nearer relative of the duty imposed on him by law, he indicates his readiness to render the service demanded, in case the other should prefer to be excused. **And he said, I will redeem it,** believing that it was a mere matter of paying the purchase money. V. 5. **Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance,** for such was the law of entailment connected with levirate marriages, the oldest son springing from such a union continuing the inheritance in the family of his mother. V. 6. **And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself,** he could not fulfil that condition, **lest I mar mine own inheritance,** for he held it possible to decline in the case of a woman of Moab what he would otherwise have considered a plain duty; **redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it;** his mind was definitely made up to step back. V. 7. **Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing,** whenever real estate changed hands, **for to confirm all things,** the author here explaining a custom which had been discontinued, except in the case mentioned Deut. 25, 9; **a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor,** thereby surrendering all claims to the right of possession which would have been his had he fulfilled its conditions; **and this was a testimony in Israel.** Similar selfish considerations as those urged by the unnamed kinsman in this case have caused many people to lose even greater inheritances than that of a piece of land. V. 8. **Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.** He relinquished all his claims.

The Happy Marriage of Boaz and Ruth. — V. 9. **And Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people,** those present at the transaction, **Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.** He made a formal declaration that he would fulfil the condition, that he acquired the property in question, that he was willing to marry the Moabitess. V. 10. **Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife,** acquired by taking over the obligation connected with the land, **to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not out off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place, like a withered branch which is cut off a tree; ye are witnesses this day.** V. 11. **And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders,** responding to this frank appeal and declaration, **said, We are**

witnesses, their testimony giving legal standing to the transaction. **The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house,** literally, that is about to come, like **Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel,** as the mothers of the twelve tribes; **and do thou worthily in Ephratah,** in raising up sons who would be heroes of strength, **and be famous in Bethlehem,** through the honor brought upon him by the same excellent sons; v. 12. **and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar,** the special ancestress of their own tribe, bare **unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.** It speaks well of the love and respect in which Ruth was held that the people were so unanimous in bestowing this blessing, with its prayer for such great and wonderful earthly advantages. V. 13. **So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife,** the marriage took place without delay; **and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception,** for children are Jehovah's gift, Ps. 127, 3, **and she bare a son.** V. 14. **And the women said unto Naomi,** for she no longer was lonely and wanting in women interested in her as at first, when she returned from the land of Moab, poor and bereaved, **Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman,** to redeem her from the disgrace of childlessness, of having her family cut off in Israel, **that his name may be famous in Israel,** being on the lips of many people with words of praise. V. 15. **And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life,** to refresh and cheer up her soul, **and a nourisher of thine old age,** by taking care of her in her declining years; **for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him,** surely a very high praise for Ruth,, showing the regard in which she was held by all the women of the city and neighborhood. V. 16. **And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom,** like an actual grandmother, **and became nurse unto it,** a foster-mother instructing the boy in Israelitish life and customs, an instructress in the Law of God. V. 17. **And the women, her neighbors, gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed** (servant), with reference to the fact that the boy would take care of her, as they had pictured it in their effusive congratulations; **he is the father of Jesse, the father of David,** and thus one of the ancestors of Christ, Matt. 1, 5. 6. V. 18. **Now, these are the generations of Pharez,** the list being appended to the book for quick reference; **Pharez begat Hezron,** 1 Chron. 2, 4, v. 19. **and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,** v. 20. **and Amminadab begat Nahshon,** Num. 1, 7, **and Nahshon begat Salmon** (or, Salmah), v. 21. **and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,** v. 22. **and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.** Note: To this day the Lord measures out joy as well as sorrow to His children. He may send affliction and tribulation for many years, but He will often grant a peaceful old age. Our trust in Him must never waver, for His compassion fails not, and His merciful promises will not fall to the ground.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

INTRODUCTION.

The First Book of Samuel is really only the first part of a larger history, which was later divided into two parts. When the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was made, the translators divided both the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings into two, and each of the four parts was called a book of the Kings, for which reason the subtitle in the Authorzed Version is retained, "The First Book of the Kings." Books of Samuel the historical account is called, not because Samuel was the author, although he may have left some written notes, but because he is the prominent figure in the earlier history and because he exerted a very pronounced influence in Israel even when the form of government had been changed to a monarchy. "The influence of Samuel, who had called and anointed both Saul and David, was felt in Israel throughout the reign of Saul, and must have been a decisive factor in the training of David for his future task. Beginning with a biographical sketch of Samuel's life before he became the last Judge of Israel, the author takes up the thread of history at the point where the Book of Judges drops it after relating the end of Samson, and carries it forward to the close of David's reign." Samuel, the last Judge of Israel, Saul, the first king of Israel, and David, the greatest king of Israel, are the three leading characters. But the book was not merely written "to be a record of the lives of three great men whom God gave to His people, although their story is full of human interest. The Christian reader will retain the proper point of view, that this story sets forth the

providential control which God exercised over the affairs of His people, achieving His purposes without fail."

The author of the book does not mention his name, and it is impossible from the contents to make a definite statement regarding the authorship except this, that it was not composite. Samuel himself could not have written the entire history, since his death is related, 1 Sam. 25, 1; 28, 3; also the division of the people into two separate kingdoms is referred to, which took place long after Samuel's death, 1 Sam. 11, 8; 15, 4; cp. 27, 6. It is probable that some prophet living not long after the time of Solomon is the author. The First Book of Samuel is easily divisible into two parts, the restoration of the theocratic government in Israel under Samuel, the last Judge, who also was a prophet of the Lord; the history of Saul's reign, namely, his first campaigns, disobedience, and rejection, his persecution of David, his war against the Philistines, and his death.[1] The lessons of this history are readily applied.

1) *Concordia Bible Class*, March, 1919, 39; Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 30. 31.

CHAPTER 1.

Samuel's Birth and Presentation to the Lord.

The Unhappiness and the Prayer of Hannah. — V. 1. **Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mount Ephraim,** usually called Ramah, some six miles northwest of Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin, **and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph,** after whom this special region was named, **an Ephrathite,** cp. 1 Chron. 6, 22—27, belonging to the tribe of Levi; v. 2. **and he had two wives: the name of the one was Hannah** (charm, grace), **and the name of the other Peninnah** (coral, pearl); **and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.** The bigamy of Elkanah, though tolerated by God among the Jews, was opposed to the original divine institution of monogamy, and the misfortune which attached to this relation appeared in Elkanah's married and family life. V. 3. **And this man went up out of his city yearly,** year after year, **to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh,** evidently at the Feast of Passover and of Unleavened Bread, since he took his whole household along. **And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there.** This notice is here inserted by the author to prepare for the subsequent history. Elkanah, as a true Israelite, worshiped the great Lord of hosts, the one true God, and he brought his sacrifices of peace-offerings in order to strengthen his fellowship with this God. V. 4. **And when the time was that Elkanah offered,** it happened on the day that he brought his sacrifice, **he gave to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions,** as their part of the sacrificial feast, Deut. 12, 11—18; v. 5. **but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion,** a double portion; **for he loved Hannah,** she was his favorite wife, as Rachel had been Jacob's; **but the Lord had shut up her womb,** He had given her no children, and childlessness was rightly held to be a great misfortune, a reproach, even a divine punishment, Gen. 19, 31; 30, 1. 23. V. 6. **And her adversary, Peninnah, who was jealous of Elkanah's special love for Hannah, also provoked her sore for to make her fret,** to make her worried and excited, **because the Lord had shut up her womb,** while Peninnah, more fortunate in child-bearing and therefore boastful, made it a point to vex her with her childlessness. V. 7. **And as he,** Elkanah, **did so year by year,** followed the same custom, **when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she,** Peninnah, **provoked her,** for she had her flock of children about her and made use of the occasion to sneer at lonely Hannah; **therefore she wept and did not eat,** she was too deeply hurt to have any appetite. V. 8. **Then said Elkanah, her husband, to her, Hannah, why weepest thou, and why eatest thou not, and why is thy heart grieved?** This is a climax showing his deep anxiety and solicitude for her. **Am I not better to thee than ten sons?** The deep and tender love of the husband tried to console her in her great disappointment. V. 9. **So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk,** at the conclusion of the sacrificial meal. **Now Eli, the priest,** the high priest at that time, **sat upon a seat by a post of the Temple of the Lord,** at the entrance to the Tabernacle of Jehovah, the palace of the Lord. V. 10. **And she was in bitterness of soul,** on account of the continuance of her hopelessness and of the vexations which she suffered from her adversary, **and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore,** her many tears being an expression of her grief because all her petitions up to that time had ben unheard. V. 11. **And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts,** Jehovah of Sabaoth, **if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid,** the misery of her childlessness, and remember me, **and not forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life,** consecrate him for lifelong service in the

Tabernacle, to which the Levites were not pledged otherwise; **and there shall no razor come upon his head**, he was to be a perpetual Nazarite, Num. 6, 2 ff. V. 12. **And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord**, in a long and urgent prayer, **that Eli marked her mouth**, for she was evidently out in the court of the Tabernacle, not far from the altar of burnt offerings. V. 13. **Now Hannah, she spake in her heart**, literally, "to her heart"; she was so deeply engrossed with her trouble that she forgot her surroundings. Her face was full of expressive eagerness and emotion, but her communing with the Lord was all in her heart. **Only her lips moved**, in the intensity of her fervor, **but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli**, drawing a rash and profane conclusion, **thought she had been drunken**, having partaken of too much wine at the sacrificial meal. V. 14. **And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee**, namely, by sleeping off its effects in secret, where her supposed condition would offend no one. V. 15. **And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit**, in deep trouble, this being an emphatic and indignant denial of Eli's suspicions; **I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink**, a very intoxicating beverage made of barley, dates, and honey, **but have poured out my soul before the Lord.** Cp. Ps. 42, 5. V. 16. **Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial**, be was not to place her on a level with worthless, bad women; **for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto**, while Eli had observed her. V. 17. **Then Eli answered and said**, not only retracting his accusation, but remembering the dignity of his office, **Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him**, not a prophecy, but a sincere wish and prayer. V. 18. **And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight**, she showed her modesty, reverence, and humility in accepting the kind wishes of the high priest. **So the woman went her way and did eat, her heart was eased**, so she could partake of food, **and her countenance was no more sad.** The right conclusion of a prayer is a confident Amen, which testifies that we are sure of the hearing of our prayer by God in advance.

Samuel Born and Brought to Shiloh. — V. 19. **And they rose up in the morning early, and worshiped before the Lord**, took part in the morning service, **and returned, and came to their house to Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah, his wife; and the Lord remembered her**, for it is He alone whose gift children are in marriage. V. 20. **Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived**, at the end of the period of pregnancy, **that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel** (asked of God), **saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord**, he was a perpetual reminder of the fact that God hears prayers, even for temporal blessings. V. 21. **And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow**, for apparently he also had made a promise to the Lord and now offered this in the form of a sacrifice in addition to those portions of his property which belonged to the Lord by law. Samuel may, at that time, have been two or three months old. V. 22. **But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned**, which occurred at the age of three years, **then I will bring him that he may appear before the Lord and there abide forever**, consecrated to the Lord's service all his life. V. 23. **And Elkanah, her husband, said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good**, he was in entire sympathy with his wife in this matter; **tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish His word**, fulfil it, bring it to completion, namely, so far as his destination for the Lord's service was concerned. **So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.** V. 24. **And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks**, one for each year of the boy's life, **and one ephah of flour** (about 26 quarts), three-tenth deals being required for each bullock, **and a bottle of wine**, for a drink-offering, **and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh; and the child was young**, having probably just turned three years. V. 25. **And they slew a bullock**, as a burnt offering to accompany the consecration of Samuel, **and brought the child to Eli**, for both parents presented him to the Lord. V. 26. **And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord**, the circumstance by which Eli was to remember her. V. 27. **For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him**; v. 28. **therefore also I have lent him to the Lord**, given him to the Lord in turn; **as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord**, given to the Lord as one that had been granted by the Lord. **And he, Elkanah, as the father of the house, worshiped the Lord there.** It is pleasing to God if parents consecrate their sons for the service of the Church. But the main thing is for all men who have experienced God's love and faithfulness in their lives to place themselves in the Lord's service, both body and soul.

CHAPTER 2.

Hannah's Song.
The Wickedness of Eli's Sons.

Hannah's Song of Thankfulness. — V. 1. **And Hannah prayed and said,** in an exaltation of spirit brought about by the Holy Ghost, **My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord,** said of vigorous courage and consciousness of power; **my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies,** being opened widely to praise the salvation of the Lord; **because I rejoice in Thy salvation,** in the merciful kindness which Jehovah had shown her. V. 2. **There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside Thee,** His holiness being the reflection of His majesty; **neither is there any rock like our God,** in whom the believers may always place their trust with firm confidence, Deut. 32, 4. 15. V. 3. **Talk no more so exceeding proudly,** these words being addressed to the godless, to the enemies of Jehovah; **let not arrogancy come out of your mouth,** anything which savors of impertinence against Jehovah; **for the Lord is a God of knowledge,** an omniscient God, **and by Him actions are weighed,** or, all His doing is weighed by Him, is right and true. V. 4. **The bows of the mighty men are broken,** all human power being helpless before Him, **and they that stumbled are girded with strength,** prepared for battle by virtue of their trust in Jehovah. V. 5. **They that were full have hired out themselves for bread,** having been reduced to the most pitiful straits; **and they that were hungry ceased,** receiving the food which they need by the mercy of God, **so that the barren hath born seven,** Ps. 113, 9; **and she that hath many children is waxed feeble,** having been bereaved of her children in her old age, Jer. 15, 9. V. 6. **The Lord killeth and maketh alive,** sending danger and distress, but also delivering those that trust in Him, Ps. 30, 3. 4; **He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up,** extricating His children from deadly sorrow, from extreme misfortune, and placing them in safety and joy. V. 7. **The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich,** for in His hands are all the treasures of the world; **He bringeth low and lifteth up.** V. 8. **He raiseth up the poor out of the dust and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,** from the deepest dishonor and disgrace, in which one is, as it were, trodden under foot, **to set them among princes,** on seats of honor, such as are occupied by the nobility, **and to make them inherit the throne of glory,** to hold the very opposite position of that which formerly was theirs; **for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,** having been erected by Him and being held in place by His almighty power, **and He hath set the world upon them,** as the Creator and Sustainer of the world. V. 9. **He will keep the feet of His saints,** to guard them from tottering and falling, **and the wicked shall be silent in darkness,** deprived of the light of God's mercy; **for by strength shall no man prevail;** it is impossible for man, in his own might, to defy the storms of life. V. 10. **The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces,** for Jehovah will destroy and annihilate those who lift up their voices to challenge Him; **out of heaven shall He thunder upon them,** as a warning of the nearness of His judgment; **the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King,** to His Anointed, the future Messiah of Israel, **and exalt the horn of His Anointed.** The kingdom of Christ extends to the ends of the earth, which He will judge on the Last Day. Then the unbelievers, the godless, will be condemned to everlasting damnation, but the power of the Christ of God will be established throughout eternity. Thus the inspired song reached its wonderful climax. V. 11. **And Elkanah,** with his household, **went to Ramah to his house. And the child,** Samuel, **did minister unto the Lord before Eli, the priest.**

The Wicked Practises of Eli's Sons. — V. 12. **Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial,** worthless, profitless rascals; **they knew not the Lord,** they did not fear Him, they had no faith in Him. V. 13. **And the priest's custom with the people was that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth,** a trident, or three-pronged fork, **in his hand;** v. 14. **and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself.** That was the greedy conduct of the priests in the preparation of the sacrificial meal after the sacrifice proper had been brought. This manner of acting had already become the rule. **So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither,** thus robbing the people and the Lord, instead of confining themselves to the wave-breast, the heave-shoulder, and certain other perquisites, Lev. 7, 28—36; Num. 18. V. 15. **Also before they burned the fat,** before the sacrifice proper, which included the fat, Lev. 3, 3—5, **the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest,** for they did not want boiled meat all the time; **for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw,** such as was still full of strength and juice. V. 16. **And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently,** that is, he was about to have the fat of his offering burned, according to law, **and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he,** the priests' servant, **would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now; and**

if not, I will take it by force. These abuses had been introduced by Eli's sons in connection with the peace-offerings, with which a sacrificial meal was connected. V. 17. **Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord,** it was an outrage equivalent to sacrilege; **for men abhorred the offering of the Lord,** they despised and blasphemed it as a form of graft in holy places. That is the height of corruption in the Church, when the servants of the sanctuary themselves are godless rascals, having only their temporal advancement in view, and thus give the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme.

Hannah Blessed by the Lord. — V. 18. **But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod,** a garment for the shoulders patterned after the ephod of the high priest, worn by all priests as a sign of their calling. V. 19. **Moreover, his mother made him a little coat,** an every-day garment, **and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice,** a close connection thus being maintained between the home of the parents and the lad in the Tabernacle. V. 20. **And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord,** or, instead of the begged one, Samuel, whom she begged from the Lord, in place of the gift which was asked for Jehovah. **And they went unto their own home.** V. 21. **And the Lord visited Hannah** once more in merciful goodness, **so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters.** That was the Lord's reward for her pious confidence in Him. **And the child Samuel grew before the Lord,** in wisdom and knowledge, which flowed from the fear of the Lord. That is a blessing of the Lord, when a boy, a young man, grows up in the fear of the Lord, increases in knowledge and in favor with God and men.

The Prophecy against Eli. — V. 22. **Now Eli was very old and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel,** as described above, **and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** women who performed certain services in the court of the Tabernacle, Ex. 38, 8, so that the Sanctuary was desecrated by the sensual lusts of these men, by their seduction of the serving women. V. 23. **And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people,** the report of the wickedness having been brought to him. V. 24. **Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear; ye make the Lord's people to transgress,** for many took offense and followed the evil example set before them. V. 25. **If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him,** in case of transgressions between men, God, as the chief Judge, adjudicates the matter through the government instituted by Him; **but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him,** in that case no man can act as intercessor. **Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father,** to his mild reproaches, **because the Lord would slay them,** they had gone so far in wilful sinning that they had become obdurate, they were on their way to perdition. V. 26. **And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men,** this being noted here once more by way of effective contrast. V. 27. **And there came a man of God,** a prophet, **unto Eli and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear,** reveal Myself, **unto the house of thy father,** Aaron, through his direct ancestor Ithamar, the son of Aaron, **when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?** V. 28. **And did I choose him,** rather, affirmatively, "I did choose him," Aaron, **out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon Mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me,** Ex. 28, 1. 4; Num. 16, 5; 18, 1. 7. **And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?** Lev. 2, 3. 10; 6, 16. V. 29. **Wherefore kick ye at My sacrifice and at Mine offering,** treading them under foot, **which I have commanded in My habitation,** in the Tabernacle (this was done by the contemptuous, blasphemous behavior of the priests), **and honorest thy sons above Me,** by not taking an energetic stand against them, **to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel, My people,** by taking all the choicest parts of the sacrificial animals? V. 30. **Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before Me forever,** in performing the service of priests; for the fact that Eli, of the family of Ithamar, was high priest at this time, was only a temporary arrangement, the descendants of Phinehas probably lacking the energy needed for the office at that time. **But now the Lord saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed,** covered with contempt and shame. V. 31. **Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm,** the word here standing for might, power, influence, authority, **and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house,** as long as the family existed, none of its members would reach a ripe old age. V. 32. **And thou shalt see an enemy in My habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel,** he would, so far as his own family was concerned, see distress and affliction for the inhabitants of the Tabernacle in all the blessings which the Lord would show His people, since they would not share in the national prosperity and the consequent rejoicing; **and there shall not be an old man in**

thine house forever. V. 33. **And the man,** the descendant, **of thine whom I shall not cut off from Mine altar shall be to consume thine eyes and to grieve thine heart; and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.** So there would always be a descendant of the house of Eli serving at the Tabernacle, to be a witness of the decay of the true worship, thus being consumed with anxiety and worry over the fate of the Tabernacle. V. 34. **And this shall be a sign unto thee,** an earnest of the fulfilment of His threat, **that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die both of them.** That is the invariable consequence, when parents hold their peace at the sins of their children or venture only a faint objection, omit reproof and correction, love or fear their children more than God. V. 35. **And I will raise Me up a faithful priest that shall do according to that which is in Mine heart and in My mind,** one upon whom He could rely absolutely, and who would perform all his work exactly in the manner most pleasing to the Lord. **And I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before Mine Anointed forever.** This is a prophecy of Christ, who is Priest and King in one person. V. 36. **And it shall come to pass that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him,** in the position of a suppliant, with bended knee, **for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices that I may eat a piece of bread.** He who takes his refuge to Messiah, the great Priest-king, confessing the need brought upon him by reason of his sinfulness, will find in Him grace and mercy and peace without end.

CHAPTER 3.

Samuel's Call.

The Lord Reveals Himself to Samuel. — V. 1. **And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli,** as a special servant of the Sanctuary, under the immediate direction of the high priest. **And the Word of the Lord was precious in those days,** it rarely happened that the Lord sent a message by direct prophetic announcement; **there was no open vision,** literally, "there was no vision spread abroad," made public frequently. There was lacking, on the one hand, a pious, God-fearing priesthood and, on the other hand, an appreciation of the divine Spirit's work through the Word. "Jehovah had indeed promised His people to send prophets, who should reveal to them His will and counsel, Deut. 18, 15 ff.; cp. Num. 23, 23; but since divine revelation presupposes willingness to accept the truth on the part of man, the unbelief and the disobedience of the people was able to hinder the fulfilment of this and similar prophecies, and God could in punishment deprive the idolatrous people of His Word." (Keil.) V. 2. **And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place,** namely, to sleep at night in the room reserved for him, **and his eyes began to wax dim that he could not see,** this being added by way of parenthesis, in order to explain the action of Samuel, who supposed that Eli was calling him to assist him in some manner, v. 3. **and ere the lamp of God,** the large candlestick with its seven lamps, whose oil was replenished every morning, since they went out toward morning, **went out in the Temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep,** v. 4. **that the Lord called Samuel; and he answered, Here am I.** So Samuel was sleeping in one of the rooms which were built in the court of the Tabernacle for the use of the priests and Levites who happened to be on duty, and it was toward morning. V. 5. **And he ran unto Eli and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me.** That was the conclusion which he naturally drew, and his faithful willingness took him to the room of Eli as quickly as he could get there — a fine example to many a young man of our days. **And he, Eli, said, I called not; lie down again,** evidently supposing that Samuel had merely dreamed he was being called. **And he went and lay down.** V. 6. **And the Lord called yet again, Samuel! And Samuel arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me.** He was again, as a faithful servant, ready to do his master's bidding; there was no peevish discontent in his voice for having been called out of his rest. **And he, Eli, answered, I called not, my son; lie down again,** still believing that the young man was being misled by some illusion of the senses. V. 7. **Now, Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the Word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.** This is added by way of explanation. Samuel did not yet possess the special, direct knowledge of God, for this was given only by an extraordinary revelation of Jehovah, in dreams and in visions, and this form of manifestation was at that time practically unknown in Israel; hence his ignorance. V. 8. **And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli,** still with the same cheerful willingness which disregarded its own comfort, **and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me.** He was ready for service day or night, and without the slightest irritation. **And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.** This was the conclusion which Eli reached from his knowledge of God's manner

of dealing with His prophets. V. 9. **Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.** So Samuel, ever obedient, even while he may have wondered about the strangeness of the command, **went and lay down in his place.** V. 10. **And the Lord,** who had at first manifested Himself merely by His voice, **came, and stood,** in a vision which must have been plainly visible to Samuel upon awakening, **and called as at other times, Samuel! Samuel! Then Samuel answered, Speak, for Thy servant heareth.** Samuel is not only an example of obedience, but also of willingness to hear the voice of the Lord. Like him all believers should open their ears and hearts to God and give heed to the voice which comes to us in the Word.

The Prophecy against Eli. — V. 11. **And the Lord said to Samuel,** in a revelation which was his call to the office of prophet in Israel, **Behold, I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle,** with sudden dread and horror, which almost cause a person to lose his senses over the fearfulness of the impending doom. V. 12. **In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house,** the destruction foretold by the prophet, chap. 2, 27—36; **when I begin, I will also make an end,** He would both begin and also conclude what He had decided upon as punishment. V. 13. **For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth,** punish him and his entire family on account of the transgression of his sons, of whose guilt he had become a partaker; **because his sons made themselves vile,** deliberately placed themselves under the curse of the Law, **and he restrained them not,** made no serious, emphatic move to interfere with them. V. 14. **And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli,** by an oath which made the sentence of punishment irrevocable, **that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.** It was no longer a warning, but a definite statement of a curse which was about to descend upon Eli and his house for his neglect of the duty which he should have performed to his sons as father, high priest, and judge, by employing severe chastisement and punishment upon them. The harm done by the crimes of the priests affected the whole family, even their descendants. This story should be heeded more in our days, when mawkish sentimentality is making a farce of bringing up children. V. 15. **And Samuel lay until the morning,** sleeping in his bed, untroubled by an evil conscience, **and opened the doors of the house of the Lord,** those of the entrance to the court, so the people might come in for the morning worship. **And Samuel feared to tell Eli the vision,** the revelation which he had received, since it threatened evil to the house of his master. V. 16. **Then Eli called Samuel and said, Samuel, my son! And he answered, Here am I.** Even the divine revelation which had been vouchsafed him did not change the simple obedience of Samuel. V. 17. **And he, Eli, said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?** He felt that the revelation concerned him, and he was eager to know it. **I pray thee hide it not from me; God do so to thee, and more also,** in a severe punishment, **if thou hide anything from me of all the things that He said unto thee.** Eli's excitement is seen in the climax formed by his words. "He asks for the word of the Lord; he demands an exact and complete statement; he adjures Samuel not to conceal anything from him." (Lange.) V. 18. **And Samuel told him every whit,** placing the pathetic demand of Eli above his own fear and sorrow, **and hid nothing from him.** Thus Samuel entered upon his prophetic office. **And he, Eli, said, It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.** He expressed his humble submission to the will of the Lord, for with all his weakness and in spite of his transgression he was a believer in Jehovah of Israel, and he realized the justice of the punishment. V. 19. **And Samuel grew,** he reached full manhood, **and the Lord was with him,** not only by general manifestations of His goodness and mercy, but also by special revelations and gifts of the Spirit which the Lord imparted to him as His prophet, **and did let none of his words fall to the ground,** what he prophetically announced as the Word of Jehovah was fulfilled. V. 20. **And all Israel from Dan,** on the extreme northern boundary, **to Beersheba,** the city in the extreme south, **knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord,** throughout all Israel, in the entire land of Canaan, Samuel was known as a faithful, trustworthy prophet, upon whose words one could depend. V. 21. **And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh,** He continued to manifest Himself there; **for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord.** God made known His will to the people by the revelation of His Word to Samuel, who was thus the first exponent of the permanent prophetic order. It has happened repeatedly in history that the Lord graciously visited His people after a season of spiritual drought and gave them His Gospel in rich measure.

CHAPTER 4.

War with the Philistines.

The Ark of the Covenant in Camp. — V. 1. **And the word of Samuel came to all Israel,** it was heard throughout the nation and served for the guidance of Israel, the people accepted it without question as the Word of Jehovah. **Now, Israel went out against the Philistines,** who at that time were their oppressors, **to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer,** a place between Mizpeh and Shen which was afterwards given this name, chap. 7, 12; **and the Philistines pitched in Aphek,** also some distance west or northwest of Jerusalem. V. 2. **And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel; and when they joined battle,** the charge being made from both sides at the same time, **Israel was smitten before the Philistines,** they were worsted in the encounter; **and they slew of the army,** while the Israelites were trying to hold their line of battle, **in the field,** out on the plain where the battle was fought, **about four thousand men.** They did not, however, put the Israelites to rout that day. V. 3. **And when the people were come into the camp,** in an orderly retreat, withdrawing their forces before the superior strength of the enemy, **the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines?** They felt that this was the only explanation of their failure, for they had apparently undertaken the campaign at the suggestion of Samuel. **Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.** Instead of turning to the Lord in true sorrow and repentance over their sins, the people placed their trust, in a superstitious manner, in the material vessel, as in a fetish. Their faith was obscured by this heathenish feature. It was in vain for them to trust in God, when they were not purged from their sins. V. 4. **So the people sent to Shiloh that they might bring from thence the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims,** the very name intimating their hope that God would join their forces by this mere outward act on their part; for God had revealed Himself to Moses from the cover of the ark, from between the cherubim, Ex. 25, 22. **And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Ark of the Covenant of God,** men whose acts in desecrating the Sanctuary of the Lord were notorious. V. 5. **And when the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came into the camp,** borne on the shoulders of the reprobate priests, **all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again,** resounding and reverberating from the shouting of the army. V. 6. **And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout,** the confident cry of victory, **they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood,** found out, **that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.** V. 7. **And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp.** Like all heathen, they had a superstitious fear of the supernatural, also of the deities of their enemies. Moreover, the Philistines feared the power of the God of the Israelites all the more, since the fame of His powerful deeds in former times had come to their ears. **And they said,** in consternation and fear, **Woe unto us! For there hath not been such a thing heretofore.** This expedient had never been adopted by Israel before this. V. 8. **Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.** As heathen they speak of the true God in the plural, and in their excitement they express a confused view, by combining the recollection of the plagues in Egypt and the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea into one statement. But the very fear, consternation, and despair of the Philistines encouraged them to make a last supreme effort to break the power of Israel. V. 9. **Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you; quit yourselves like men and fight!** A decisive victory on the part of Israel would have turned the tables and made the Philistines tributary, and the fear of such a contingency was another factor in strengthening their arms. V. 10. **And the Philistines fought,** in a bitter attack; **and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent,** back to his home. **And there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen,** a total of thirty thousand (for Israel had no cavalry). V. 11. **And the ark of God was taken,** as a welcome prize; **and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas,** the guardians of the ark, **were slain.** Thus the Lord gave His people evidence that He had indeed withdrawn His merciful presence from them, in spite of the fact that they had the ark in their camp. This is a serious warning to all who boast of their orthodoxy in a mere fleshly manner, relying upon this fact to give them a standing before God, just as many have the name of Christ in their mouths, but are far from accepting Him as their personal Savior. God wants true repentance, faith, fear of His Word. A dead orthodoxy without true piety of the heart avails nothing.

Death of Eli and of His Daughter-in-Law. — V. 12. **And there ran a man of Ben-**

jamin out of the army, which was now in utter rout, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent and with earth upon his head, as signs of a sudden deep grief, in which the heart is rent with sorrow. V. 13. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching, straining his feeble eyes as much as their remaining strength permitted; for his heart trembled for the ark of God, especially since it had been taken without divine permission, and he was its real guardian, responsible for it. And when the man came into the city and told it, brought the news of the defeat of Israel's army, all the city cried out, in sorrow, fear, and dread. V. 14. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? The very sound of the cries filled him with grave forebodings. And the man came in hastily and told Eli. V. 15. Now, Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim that he could not see; they were set in the lifeless, motionless appearance found in the extremely old, just before total blindness ensues. V. 16. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. He was in a position to give authentic news. And he said, What is there done, my son? What news is there? What happened? V. 17. And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. The fugitive poured forth his news in four sharp sentences, every succeeding blow being harder, until the force of the message reached its climax in the crushing report that the ark was lost to the enemies. V. 18. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, all the other blows having been expected by Eli, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, evidently at the entrance to the court of the Tabernacle, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man and heavy. It was the beginning of the divine judgment upon Eli and his family, although he himself seems to have died in the fear of God. And he had judged Israel forty years. V. 19. And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered; and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her, literally, "turned upon her in a sudden attack," came upon her prematurely. V. 20. And about the time of her death, for her strength was not able to bear the blow, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son, the message being intended to comfort and strengthen her. But she answered not, neither did she regard it; she entirely ignored this information, since her mind was occupied with the more serious matter of the ark. V. 21. And she named the child Ichabod (not-glory), saying, The glory is departed from Israel, is carried into captivity, because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. V. 22. And she said, repeating her complaint in a dull repetition, as though unable to grasp the magnitude of the horror which had come upon Israel, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken. "With the abandonment of the earthly throne of His glory the Lord seemed to have annulled His covenant of grace with Israel; for the ark, with the tables of the Law and the mercy-seat, was the visible pledge of the covenant of grace which Jehovah had made with Israel." (Keil.) The account of this death contains a great deal of comfort for poor sinners. He who in the hour of death clings to the Word of God and the covenant of His mercy dies a blessed death. God's Word is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

CHAPTER 5.

The Philistines Smitten because of the Ark.

THE ARK IN ASHDOD. — V. 1. And the Philistines took the ark of God, which they had captured in the great battle, and brought it from Ebenezer, as the place was afterward called, unto Ashdod, a city of Philistia almost due west of the battle-field, on the Mediterranean, apparently the leading city in the federation of city-states among the Philistines. V. 2. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, their chief idol, to whose honor they had erected sanctuaries in all their principal cities, Judg. 16, 23, and set it by Dagon, near the picture or statue of this deity, which had a human head and hands, but a fish-body, to symbolize the fruitfulness of the sea, as represented by the fish. V. 3. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon, to whom they ascribed their victory over the Israelites, was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord, in an attitude of worship, this being intended as a sign to the Philistines that the God of Israel was not to be conquered, but that every idol and so-called deity would have to sink to the ground before His majesty and

power. **And they**, the priests of the Philistines, **took Dagon and set him in his place again**, apparently under the impression that the figure had toppled over by chance, not having been set up securely. V. 4. **And when they arose early on the morrow morning**, the second morning after the arrival of the ark, **behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord**, in the same posture of abject adoration; **and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands**, the hollow forms of his hands, **were cut off**, severed as by a clean stroke, **upon the threshold**, namely, that of the inner sanctuary, in which the idol was placed, where the parts might be trodden on by every one who entered; **only the stump of Dagon**, his fish-body, that which was properly the Fish-god, **was left to him.** V. 5. **Therefore neither the priests of Dagon**, of whom there seems to have been a special order, **nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day**, all visitors to his shrine carefully stepped over the door-sill, lest they should desecrate the place where the head of the god had lain. V. 6. **But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod**, in an oppressive visitation, probably in the form of a plague of field-mice, to which the context seems to point, **and he destroyed them**, caused the death of many of them, **and smote them with emerods**, with an infectious skin-disease in the form of boils and ulcers, **even Ashdod and the coast thereof**, the entire vicinity. V. 7. **And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said**, rightly concluding that it was the God of Israel who was striking them, **The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us**, they regarded it as the medium, as the bearer of all the evils; **for His hand is sore upon us and upon Dagon, our god.** Thus God proved to the heathen, as He does to the unbelievers at times to this day, that all idols are nothing before Him, that those things in which the world places its trust crumble to pieces before the manifestation of His majesty and righteousness.

The Ark in Gath and Ekron. — V. 8. **They sent, therefore, and gathered all the lords of the Philistines**, the heads of their five city-states, **unto them and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?** As eager as they were to have the ark in their city as a trophy of their great victory, so eager were they now to get rid of the unlucky piece of furniture. **And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath.** The princes of the Philistines intended to make an experiment, in order to determine whether the misfortunes which struck Ashdod were really to be attributed to the ark or were the result of chance. **And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither**, farther to the east. V. 9. **And it was so that, after they had carried it about**, caused it to be taken in the indicated direction, to this second city, **the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction**, disquietude, consternation taking hold upon all the inhabitants, a feeling of impending disaster; **and He smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts**, they were plagued with the same eruption of boils as the people of Ashdod had been, and the boils apparently broke open, causing painful ulcers. V. 10. **Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron**, the chief city in the northwestern part of the Philistine country. **And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron**, by the command of the Philistine chiefs, **that the Ekronites cried out**, for they had been informed of the plague which had struck Ashdod and Gath, saying, **They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us to slay us and our people.** But their protest was ignored, and the ark was brought into their city. V. 11. **So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines**, for a second conference, and said, **Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not and our people.** The plague was not only generally prevalent, but also especially malignant, the effects being exceptionally deadly; **for there was a deadly destruction**, a consternation of terror on account of the sudden death of so many people, **throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there**, the severity of the plague here reached its greatest height. V. 12. **And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods**, being extremely ill with the boil-sickness; **and the cry of the city went up to heaven**, for the Philistines were forced to acknowledge that in this plague the almighty hand of the God of Israel was revealed. Thus the Lord revenged the sacrilege of the heathen in laying their hands upon the ark consecrated to Him. When unbelievers presume to attack the Word of God, to blaspheme and persecute the Word of Salvation, and, in addition, refuse to bow under the chastening hand of God, He often visits them with very severe plagues and terrors.

CHAPTER 6.

Return of the Ark to Israel.

The Ark Sent Back to Beth-Shemesh. — V. 1. **And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months,** in the three cities of the Philistine territory which were named in the preceding chapter. V. 2. **And the Philistines,** as represented by their five lords, **called for the priests and the diviners,** all of whom were supposed to possess soothsaying power to reveal the counsel of the deity, **saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord?** What form of procedure was advisable in the circumstances? **Tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.** They were especially anxious to find out what gifts of atonement must accompany the ark on its return in order that the plague might be stopped. V. 3. **And they,** the soothsayers, **said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty,** without some expiatory gift; **but in any wise return Him a trespass-offering,** a sacrifice or gift to atone for their offense, to wipe out their debt; **then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why His hand is not removed from you;** by the cure which the soothsayers expected to follow this course the people would learn that it was actually God's hand which was smiting them, a matter which the priests themselves were not yet quite ready to concede. V. 4. **Then said they, What shall be the trespass-offering which we shall return to Him? They answered, Five golden emerods and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines,** which, in turn, agreed with that of the city-states in the federation; **for one plague was on you all and on your lords.** In suggesting five golden boils and five golden mice the soothsayers followed the ancient custom by which likenesses of the diseased parts were dedicated to the deity to whom the sickness was ascribed. V. 5. **Wherefore ye shall make images,** carved or engraved likenesses, **of your emerods and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel,** confessing that the plagues with which they had been smitten had been laid upon them in justice; **peradventure He will lighten His hand from off you, by causing the punishment to stop, and from off your gods, and from off your land,** the burden of the chastisement thus being taken from their entire nation. Still they are careful to speak conditionally, in order to have an excuse if their plan should fail. V. 6. **Wherefore, then, do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts,** Ex. 7, 13? **When He had wrought wonderfully among them,** carried out His avenging purpose upon them, **did they not let the people go and they departed?** Cp. Ex. 12, 31 ff. The Philistines were urged to profit by the example of the Egyptians, not as a matter of conviction or of confession of the true God, but of expediency, the God of Israel apparently being the stronger God, who therefore had to be humored. V. 7. **Now, therefore, make a new cart,** take and prepare in the proper manner, **and take two milch kine on which there hath come no yoke,** cp. Deut. 21, 3, **and tie the kine to the cart,** hitching them before the cart to draw it, **and bring their calves home from them,** holding them back in the barn; v. 8. **and take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold which ye return Him for a trespass-offering,** the five golden boils and the five golden mice, **in a coffer,** a small chest, **by the side thereof; and send it away that it may go,** giving the strange draft-animals their head. Only such things were to be used as had not been desecrated by profane use, in order to show proper honor to the dreaded God of Israel. V. 9. **And see, if it,** the cart as thus prepared, **goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh,** within the territory of Israel, **then He,** the God of Israel, **hath done us this great evil; but if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.** The crafty priests of Dagon, who feared for their prestige, had purposely specified cows with calves, since it was probable that their instinct, their natural impulse, would tend to make them turn back to their stalls, unless a higher power restrained them, compelling them to take the road to Beth-shemesh and hold it. V. 10. **And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home;** v. 11. **and they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.** V. 12. **And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh,** headed directly for the highway leading to the nearest city of Israel, just beyond the boundary, **and went along the highway,** keeping to the road, **lowing as they went,** because they wanted their calves, **and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left,** made no attempt to go back to their stalls; **and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh,** to find out where the animals would take the ark. It was evident that the living God directed the course of the cart, and that it was He who had sent the punishment upon the Philistines. It may well be that this realization caused at least some of the Philistines to turn to the true God. Thus many a national calamity has, in the hands of God, been a means of making people realize their sinfulness and turn to the living God for their salvation.

The Ark Accepted, but the People Slain. V. 13. **And they of Beth-shemesh,** which was a city set aside for priests on the boundary between Judah and Dan, Josh. 15, 10; 21, 16, **were reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley,** about the beginning of June; **and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it,** very much pleased to know that it had been returned to Israel. V. 14. **And the ark came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone,** the cows came to a halt there of their own free will; **and they,** the inhabitants of the city, **clave the wood of the cart and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord.** V. 15. **And the Levites,** who also were living in the city, **took down the ark of the Lord,** had taken it down as soon as they received news of the joyful happening, **and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh,** in a second sacrificial act, **offered burnt offerings,** thus consecrating themselves anew to the service of the Lord, **and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the Lord,** the sacrificial meals being intended to renew their fellowship with Jehovah, who had proved Himself such a mighty God, the only true Lord. V. 16. **And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it,** being witnesses of this revelation of the God of Israel, **they returned to Ekron the same day,** having followed the instructions of their priests. V. 17. **And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass-offering unto the Lord,** as expiatory gifts: **for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one,** these being the five city-states of the Philistines; v. 18. **and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities and of country villages,** every city and town in the five states thus being represented by a figure, evidently because the plague of the mice had extended over the entire country, **even unto the great stone of Abel,** that mighty altar-like ledge in the field of Joshua, **whereon they set the ark of the Lord; which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite,** a mute witness and monument of the event as here recorded. V. 19. **And he,** God, **smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they,** overcome by a blasphemous curiosity, **had looked into the ark of the Lord,** in a manner which did not agree with the holiness of Jehovah, to whom the ark was dedicated, **even He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men. And the people lamented because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.**[2]) Apparently the presence of the ark attracted a great many sightseers from the entire surrounding country, who came with anything but a reverent mind and were therefore punished by Jehovah. V. 20. **And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall He go up from us?** They were afraid to keep the ark in their own midst after the great tragedy had occurred. V. 21. **And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim,** a city of Judah somewhat farther to the east, **saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down and fetch it up to you.** The Beth-shemites felt that they were no better than the men who had been killed, and they dreaded a recurrence of the tragedy. All those who dare to draw near to the means of grace, the Word and the Sacrament, with fleshly minds, with sacrilegious hearts, will receive no blessing, but only God's judgment and condemnation.

2) The fact that the *vav* (and) is missing in the numeral of the Hebrew text, and that the larger number is omitted in some manuscripts, makes it probable that only the smaller number should stand.

CHAPTER 7.

Israel's Repentance and Victory over the Philistines.

Reformation in Israel. — V. 1. **And the men of Kirjath-jearim,** to whom the Beth-shemites had sent word of the return of the ark, chap. 6, 21, **came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill,** on an elevation near the city, **and sanctified Eleazar, his son, to keep the ark of the Lord,** for he was probably of Levitical descent, otherwise he would hardly have been entrusted with this office. V. 2. **And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long,** its length, on account of conditions in Israel and on account of the oppression of the Philistines, seemed unusually great; **for it was twenty years,** twenty years of servitude and disgrace; **and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord,** turning to Him again and entreating Him to deliver them V. 3. **And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying,** with reference to the apparent sincere sorrow of the people, **If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts,** if their lamenting was no mere sham and hypocrisy, **then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth,** the male

and female idols of the heathen nations of Canaan, **from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord,** firmly established in faith and trust in Him, **and serve Him only,** for the service of the true God and of false deities of any kind does not agree together; **and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines,** announcing His relation as covenant God to them by saving them from their enemies and once more establishing them as an independent people. V. 4. **Then the children of Israel,** heeding the earnest words of their great prophet and leader, **did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth,** they completely did away with the worship of strange gods, **and served the Lord only,** they restored His exclusive worship. Here again the fact is brought out that idolatry had been practised, but in such a manner that the Jehovah worship had outwardly been kept up. It was the same mixture of true and false religion which is now found in so many parts of Christendom, where antichristian religious societies are existing in the very midst of so-called Christian congregations. V. 5. **And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mispeh,** which was used as a place of assembly at other times also, Judg. 20, 1, **and I will pray for you unto the Lord,** principally with the object of restoring them to the covenant relation with Jehovah, now that their conversion had been shown to be sincere. V. 6. **And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord,** a symbolic act of penitence as expressing their deep misery, care, and anxiety, Ps. 22, 15, **and fasted on that day,** to express the deep humiliation of their souls, **and said there, We have sinned against the Lord.** It was a frank, unequivocal confession of their guilt, accompanied by such outward acts of mourning and sorrow as showed the sincerity of their conversion to Jehovah. **And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh,** exercising the functions of his judicial position in Israel, he administered right and justice, and proposed measures that looked to the good of the people. V. 7. **And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel,** they mobilized an army to attack the children of Israel, for they considered the great assembly a hostile demonstration, if not an actual mustering for war. **And when the children of Israel heard it,** not being in readiness, evidently, for such an attack, **they were afraid of the Philistines.** V. 8. **And the children of Israel said to Samuel,** the sincerity of their recent conversion showing also in the fact that they now relied entirely upon Jehovah, **Cease not to cry unto the Lord, our God, for us,** by keeping silence for so much as one moment, **that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.** That is genuine repentance, if a sinner is truly sorrowful over his sins, makes a frank confession of his transgresions, puts away from him everything that displeases God, and places his trust in the Lord alone.

The Philistines Overthrown. — V. 9. **And Samuel took a sucking lamb,** one having been about seven days with its mother, Lev. 22, 27, **and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord,** without having divided it according to the usual form of burnt offerings. **And Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him,** gave him an answer in the defeat of their enemies, as now related. V. 10. **And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering,** while this act of worship was still going on, **the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the Lord thundered with a great thunder,** with terrific peals, which followed one after another, **on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them,** so that they were terrified, confused, and confounded; **and they were smitten before Israel,** literally, "before the face of Israel," while the Israelites were looking on in wonder. V. 11. **And the men of Israel,** while the enemies turned away in confusion, **went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them until they came under Bethcar,** below a city at some distance from the field of battle. V. 12. **Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen,** at the place where the two former battles with the Philistines had also been fought, **and called the name of it Ebenezer** (stone of help), **saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.** Although the victory did not complete the deliverance from the oppression of the Philistines, yet it pointed to the fact that Jehovah was once more with the army of Israel, and therefore this token of thanksgiving in the name of the whole people properly expressed the sentiments which were stirring their hearts. V. 13. **So the Philistines were subdued,** in consequence of this victory, **and they came no more into the coast of Israel,** all attempts made by them with this object in view were promptly frustrated; **and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel;** while he lived, they did not regain the supremacy over Israel which they once held. V. 14. **And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath,** these cities being on the Philistine frontier. These cities themselves were clearly not included in the territory which they yielded, the text merely stating that Israel recovered the land on the Philistine borders between Ekron and Gath, which had originally been subdued by the armies of Judah and Simeon, Judg. 1, 18. **And the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Phi-**

listines. **And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites;** the other Canaanitish nations, among whom the Amorites were the strongest, thought it the best policy not to undertake any campaigns against the children of Israel. V. 15. **And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life,** rendering decisions in difficult matters and proposing measures for the benefit of the people even when Saul had been made king. V. 16. **And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel,** toward the north, **and Gilgal,** in the valley of Jordan near Jericho, **and Mizpeh,** toward the southwest, **and judged Israel in all those places.** V. 17. **And his return was to Ramah,** to this city he always came back; **for there was his house; and there he judged Israel,** when not absent on one of his circuit-court trips; **and there he built an altar unto the Lord.** Although the Tabernacle remained at Shiloh for the time being, public worship was, for a number of years, carried on in other places as well. Thus Samuel, as judge, prophet, and priest, performed the work of his office and taught Israel the ways of the Lord. Herein he is a type of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Priest, Prophet, and King in one person, who sacrificed Himself for the sins of all men, gives knowledge of the salvation gained by Him through the Gospel, and lives and reigns throughout eternity.

CHAPTER 8.

Israel Demands a King.

Samuel Displeased at the Insistent Desire. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel,** the increasing infirmities of old age prompting him to take this step, whereby his sons became his assistants. V. 2. **Now, the name of his first-born was Joel** (Jehovah is God), **and the name of his second, Abiah** (Jehovah is Father); **they were judges in Beersheba,** in the extreme southern part of Canaan, important in those days as a station on the trade-route between Asia and Egypt. The very names which Samuel gave his sons are an evidence of his piety even in the days of Israel's misery and disgrace. V. 3. **And his sons walked not in his ways,** they did not follow the pious example of their father, **but turned aside after lucre,** they were covetous, avaricious, they desired money, **and took bribes, and perverted judgment,** thereby transgressing the Law of the Lord, Ex. 23, 6. 8; Deut. 16, 19, and bringing the judicial office into disrepute in the eyes of the people, thus causing the latter to desire a higher authority to guide the affairs of the nation. V. 4. **Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel unto Ramah,** as a delegation representing the whole people, v. 5. **and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways,** his advancing age was robbing him of the vigor and energy needed in the government of the nation, and the misgovernment of his sons resulted in a general degeneration of all authority; **now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.** All the heathen nations round about had kings to rule over them, and this the petition of the elders, which undoubtedly had in mind Deut. 17, 14, emphasized, especially since Moses virtually had such a contingency in view. V. 6. **But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us.** It was not the reference to the mismanagement of his sons nor to his own advancing age which hurt Samuel, but the fact that their faith was not grounded soundly enough upon Jehovah, who till now had directly managed the affairs of the nation. They wanted an external, visible kingdom as a means of safety and protection against their enemies, whereas the invisible, royal rule of Jehovah had till now been fully sufficient to protect them. **And Samuel prayed unto the Lord,** taking this difficult matter to Jehovah for solution. Instead of simply insisting upon his own wish, this humble, consecrated hero, in this important crisis in the history of his people, proved that his trust in God could not be shaken, that the Lord could be relied upon to give the right decision. V. 7. **And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee,** the demand of the people agreed with the counsel of God, He was ready to have a temporal kingdom established in Israel; **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them.** While He was ready to grant their request, He nevertheless expressed His dissatisfaction with that attitude of mind and heart on their part which showed that they did not appreciate the divine rule, but put themselves in opposition to the royal majesty of God. V. 8. **According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.** So it was the disposition of their hearts and minds which displeased the Lord, the state of mind which had ever caused them to rebel against Jehovah's rule, to forsake Jehovah for the purpose of serving other gods. In the person of Samuel they rejected the Lord and His kingdom, because they foolishly believed that their in-

terests were not sufficiently safeguarded under the present arrangement. V. 9. **Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice,** he was to accede to their demands; **howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.** Samuel was to explain to the people in detail just what they were loading upon their own shoulders by asking for a king, what the rights of the king were, and what powers he might arrogate to himself; and he was to attest and set before them their sin against Jehovah that they might purify their hearts of their proud and distrustful temper. In the midst of the Christian Church also men are found time and again who object to the easy yoke of Christ and to the beneficent instruction of the divine Word, demanding, instead, that the honor and pride of this world be introduced into the Church. Such tendencies are a source of grief to the Lord and to all sincere Christians.

The Disadvantages Set Forth to the People. — V. 10. **And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king,** thereby exhorting them to repentance. V. 11. **And he said, This will be the manner of the king,** the way in which he would probably comport himself, **that shall reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself,** press them into his own service, **for his chariots,** namely, as drivers, **and to be his horsemen,** to make up the cavalry in his army or in his body-guard; **and some shall run before his chariots,** as runners, or heralds. It is a description of the usual Oriental royal cavalcade on state occasions. V. 12. **And he will appoint him,** simply press into service, **captains over thousands and captains over fifties,** men for every position in his army, from the highest to the lowest; **and will set them to ear his ground,** to till the soil of the royal dominion, **and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war and instruments of his chariots,** the tools, vessels, and vehicles which he used in peace times. V. 13. **And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries,** to prepare fine oils and ointments for perfumery, **and to be cooks, and to be bakers,** for the household of an Oriental prince was organized on a gigantic scale, with a great deal of luxury and pomp. V. 14. **And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your oliveyards, even the best of them,** the choicest land for agricultural and horticultural purposes, **and give them to his servants,** to his courtiers. V. 15. **And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers,** the eunuchs of the Oriental courts, **and to his servants.** V. 16. **And he will take your men-servants and your maid-servants,** the very slaves whom they had purchased for their own work, **and your goodliest young men,** rather, your oxen, **and your asses, and put them to his work.** V. 17. **He will take the tenth of your sheep,** the small cattle, including goats; **and ye shall be his servants,** they would lose all their political and social freedom and place a yoke upon their necks which they would not be able to remove. V. 18. **And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you;** finding their condition unbearable, they would pray for deliverance; **and the Lord will not hear you in that day,** all their lamentation would be unavailing, as a just punishment of the Lord; the yoke once assumed they must bear forever. The description given by Samuel summarizes the tyranny and despotism of the average Oriental monarch, especially in ancient times, and some of the oppressions mentioned were later experienced by Israel in full measure. V. 19. **Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel,** they would not be dissuaded from their intention; **and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us,** v. 20. **that we also may be like all the nations,** like all the heathen people surrounding them; they no longer wanted the proud distinction of being ruled by Jehovah only; **and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.** Those were the duties of the king as they saw them, to be the leader and the governor of the people, in peace and in war. V. 21. **And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord,** again laying the whole matter before the Lord, after his unsuccessful dealing with the people. V. 22. **And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye, every man unto his city.** He needed some time to consider, with the Lord's advice, the necessary steps for the selection of a king. Thus the Lord, in yielding to the demand of the people, laid a punishment upon them. Sinful men cannot be kept in check but by force and oppression; that is a result of man's natural disobedience.

CHAPTER 9.

Saul Entertained by Samuel.

Saul Seeks the Lost Asses. — V. 1. **Now, there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite,** literally, "a son of a man of Jemini," **a mighty man of power,** literally, "a man of substance," a man living in comfortable circumstances. We have here, apparently, a case of an abbreviated chronological table, in which less important members are sometimes omitted. Cp. 1 Chron. 8, 29—33; 9, 35—39. V. 2. **And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man and a goodly,** tall, strong, and well-proportioned; **and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he,** possessed of more manly handsomeness; **from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people,** he excelled in bodily height, corresponding to his other physical development. V. 3. **And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost, they had strayed away. And Kish said to Saul, his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.** Kish was evidently an energetic man, quick in decision and action. V. 4. **And he,** Saul, **passed through Mount Ephraim,** the highlands extending down into the territory of Benjamin, moving in a northwesterly direction first, **and passed through the land of Shalisha,** in the foothills toward the west, **but they found them not; then they passed through the land of Shalim,** in a southeasterly direction, **and there they were not; and he passed through the land of the Benjamites,** its extreme western section, **but they found them not.** V. 5. **And when they were come to the land of Zuph,** southwest of the territory of Benjamin proper, **Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses and take thought for us.** The tender regard for his father's feelings was a fine trait in Saul's character at that time. V. 6. **And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man,** held in high regard and honor **by all men; all that he saith cometh surely to pass; now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go.** The city to which reference is here made may well have been Ramah or Ramathaim, for this was in the district of Zuph, in the tribe of Benjamin, chap. 1, 1; Josh. 18, 25. V. 7. **Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man?** He was worried about a possible present or fee. **For the bread is spent in our vessels,** they had consumed all the provisions which they had taken along, **and there is not a present to bring to the man of God; what have we?** Saul had not provided for such a contingency. V. 8. **And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver,** a piece or coin of determined weight and value (about 16 cents); **that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way.** V. 9. **(Beforetime in Israel,** as the author here notes in order to have his readers understand the next part of the story, **when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer.)** V. 10. **Then said Saul to his servant, Well said,** that's a good idea; **come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.** Saul here appears as a pious, God-fearing man, who valued the word of the servant of God. So the Lord often selects the men through whom He intends to accomplish great things from the lowly among the people. Only he who fears God and His Word is really fit for work in the kingdom of God.

Saul the Guest of Samuel. — V. 11. **And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water,** they met them outside the city gates, as they were on their way to perform the duty still incumbent upon the women of the Orient, **and said unto them, Is the seer here?** that is, Is he at home now? V. 12. **And they answered them and said, He is; behold, he is before you. Make haste now, for he came to-day to the city,** having returned from one of his periodical trips, chap. 7, 16; **for there is a sacrifice,** a peace-offering with a sacrificial meal, **of the people to-day in the high place,** the elevation near the city on which the offerings were made; v. 13. **as soon as ye be come into the city,** going directly ahead on the main street, **ye shall straightway find him before he go up to the high place to eat,** to take part in the sacrificial meal; **for the people will not eat,** namely, those invited, **until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice,** by speaking the prayer of thanksgiving; **and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now, therefore, get you up; for about this time,** on this very day, **ye shall find him.** V. 14. **And they went up into the city,** passing in through the gate; **and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them,** he met them on the main street, **for to go up to the high place.** Saul was apparently too diffident or bashful to address Samuel at once, but turned around and followed him. V. 15. **Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear,** literally, "uncovered his ear," revealed to him, **a day before Saul came, saying,** v. 16. **To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and**

thou shalt anoint him to be captain over My people Israel, that he may save My people out of the hand of the Philistines, for the latter were harassing the Israelites more or less, trying to regain full dominion over them; **for I have looked upon My people, because their cry is come unto Me.** He had looked upon them in mercy, and with the definite intention of bringing them deliverance. V. 17. **And when Samuel saw Saul,** as he met him on the main street of the city, **the Lord said unto him,** Samuel, **Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! This same shall reign over My people,** hold them in restraint by a sharp and strict government. V. 18. **Then Saul,** having followed Samuel down the street, **drew near to Samuel in the gate and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.** V. 19. **And Samuel answered Saul and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place,** this invitation being a mark of respect; **for ye shall eat with me to-day,** the kindness of Samuel causing him to include the servant also, **and to-morrow I will let thee go and will tell thee all that is in thine heart,** revealing to him his innermost thoughts and thus giving evidence of his prophetical ability. V. 20. **And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago,** the search thus having taken since the second day before, **set not thy mind on them,** he should not be worried about them; **for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee and on all thy father's house?** The most desirable honor, the noblest possession in all Israel, was to be his, unsought and undesired: the royal dignity. V. 21. **And Saul,** although ignorant of the full import of Samuel's words, **answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore, then, speakest thou so to me?** The warlike tribe of Benjamin had, by the fearful execution carried out upon them, Judg. 20, 20, been reduced to an inconsiderable power, and Saul was conscious of this fact. Besides, his modesty at that time would not permit him to consider himself worthy of any special honor in Israel. V. 22. **And Samuel,** without pursuing the subject further, since he wanted to awaken expectation and hope in the mind of Saul, **took Saul and his servant and brought them into the parlor,** the room where the sacrificial meal was held, **and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons,** probably the most influential men of the city. Here was another distinction for Saul. V. 23. **And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee,** when the sacrifice had been offered, earlier in the day, **of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee,** reserve it, subject to further orders. V. 24. **And the cook took up the shoulder,** evidently the heave-shoulder, for Samuel exercised the functions of a priest in Israel, **and that which was upon it,** the fat of the flesh, **and set it before Saul,** another distinct honor. **And Samuel said, Behold that which is left,** reserved! **Set it before thee and eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people,** another proof of the prophetic foresight of Samuel. **So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.** V. 25. **And when they were come down from the high place into the city,** at the close of the sacrificial meal, **Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house,** on the flat roof, where they were undisturbed, Deut. 22, 8, the purpose being gradually to prepare Saul for the announcement of the next day. V. 26. **And they arose early; and it came to pass about the spring of the day,** at the rising of the dawn, **that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house,** rather, Samuel called to Saul, who had evidently slept on the roof, by no means unusual in that country, **saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose,** made ready for his journey, **and they went out, both of them, he and Samuel, abroad,** out into the open. V. 27. **And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel,** who accompanied his guest as another mark of respect, **said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us,** for he was not to be a witness of the next act of Samuel, **(and he passed on,) but stand thou still awhile that I may show thee the word of God.** All those who are intended for the service of God's people must be instructed in God's Word and truth in order to do their work properly.

CHAPTER 10.

Saul Becomes King.

Saul Anointed by Samuel. — V. 1. **Then Samuel took a vial,** a flask or small jug, **of oil, and poured it upon his head,** as a mark of consecration to the Lord; for every king was thereby placed in God's service and under His protection, **and kissed him and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance?** The question is really an expression of the most vivid assurance, for Samuel was only the instrument in God's hand, the consecration itself being God's act. Saul was now, before God, the king over His inheritance, over the people who were His property. In further confirmation of this fact, Saul was now given three signs. V. 2.

When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulcher, between Bethel and Bethlehem, Gen. 35, **in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found; and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, he has put aside all speaking of the lost animals, and sorroweth for you,** troubled for fear that some misfortune had struck them, **saying, What shall I do for my son?** Thus Saul was not only to be relieved of his anxiety concerning the asses, but his thoughts were to be devoted entirely to the great honor which had been conferred upon him by the Lord. V. 3. **Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor,** to the well-known oak or terebinth at that place, **and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel,** which was at that time a place of worship, chap. 7, 16, **one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine,** all these being intended for sacrificial offerings; v. 4. **and they will salute thee,** with the customary greeting of peace, **and give thee two loaves of bread, which thou shalt receive of their hands,** as a token of homage. This was the second sign intended to confirm Saul in his conviction that he was chosen by God for the office of king in Israel. V. 5. **After that thou shalt come to the hill of God,** the height of Gibeah, also used for sacrifices, **where is the garrison of the Philistines,** for the enemies had succeeded in maintaining some of their military posts in the midst of Canaan; **and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city,** near his own home town, **that thou shalt meet a company of prophets,** in a solemn procession, **coming down from the high place with a psaltery,** a zitherlike instrument, **and a tabret,** a form of castanet, **and a pipe,** a flute, **and a harp,** an instrument similar to a guitar, **before them; and they shall prophesy,** sing the praises of God in ecstatic utterances; v. 6. **and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man,** be filled with the same ecstasy, his heart being made willing to take the duties of a king of Israel upon himself. This sign was to be the inward seal of his consecration for the office of king. V. 7. **And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee.** Whatever action the circumstances in Israel would suggest to the mind of Saul, that he should readily perform, without further consultation with any one, his royal calling, under the guidance of God, had even now begun. V. 8. **And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal,** in case he should be inclined to go there for the sake of bringing a sacrifice; **and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings,** for Saul could not do this work, since it pertained to the priestly office; **seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee and show thee what thou shalt do.** The reference is not to a general practise, but to a specific instance, chap. 13, 8, for the Lord still transmitted certain commands through the mouth of Samuel. V. 9. **And it was so,** it so happened, **that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart,** turned his heart and mind, set it firmly upon the work which was expected of him in his office of king; **and all those signs came to pass that day.** V. 10. **And when they came thither to the hill,** to Gibeah, the home of Saul, **behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them,** just as Samuel had foretold. V. 11. **And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime,** and he was surely well known in the entire neighborhood, **saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets,** being seized by the Spirit and drawn along into the lofty inspiration which marked their songs of praise, **then the people said one to another,** every man to his neighbor, **What is this that is come unto the son of Kish:** What has happened to him? **Is Saul also among the prophets?** It is a form of mockery, directed either against the sons of the prophets in general or against Saul in particular, the idea that he should show such a tendency being absurd. V. 12. **And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father?** Was it necessary for a person to have a special kind of father, in order to be accepted into the ranks of the prophets; what reason could be offered for excluding Saul from their company? **Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?** This proverb received further confirmation by an event in the later life of Saul, chap. 19, 24. V. 13. **And when he had made an end of prophesying,** when the ecstatic mood left him, **he came to the high place,** probably to pray and sacrifice in the holy place after experiencing the divine favor and goodness in so emphatic a way. In Christians the anointing of the Spirit is to them an earnest of the heavenly inheritance and enables them to bear the mockery of the world with quiet patience.

Saul Chosen King by Lot. — V. 14. **And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant,** upon their return home, **Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses; and when we saw that they were nowhere, we came to Samuel.** V. 15. **And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you,** he was anxious to have a detailed account of the visit. V. 16. **And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found,** hoping therewith

to dispose of this matter. **But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not,** for it was evident from Samuel's entire manner that the matter was not yet to be made public. V. 17. **And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh,** for a great popular assembly; v. 18. **and said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all kingdoms and of them that oppressed you,** these were the mighty deeds performed by God under the old order, when He was still the only acknowledged King of the nation; v. 19. **and ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations,** all the evils and oppressions which they suffered from the very kingdoms after which they now intended to pattern their state; **and ye have said unto Him, Nay, but set a king over us.** This was a last warning regarding a step the taking of which they might some day bitterly repent. **Now, therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your thousands,** the divisions of the people by the command of the Lord, Num. 1, 16. This solemn act took place in the presence of Jehovah, before the altar which had been erected in Mizpeh. V. 20. **And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near,** in order that lots might be cast or drawn, **the tribe of Benjamin was taken.** V. 21. **When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families,** the largest subdivision of the tribe, **the family of Matri was taken, and,** after the father-houses had been treated the same way and the individual heads of families came forward, **Saul, the son of Kish, was taken; and when they sought him, he could not be found,** his shyness having caused him to hide himself, since he knew the outcome of the selection. V. 22. **Therefore they enquired of the Lord further,** through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, **if the man should yet come thither,** whether they should search for Saul at home or elsewhere. **And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff,** the traveling baggage of the great assembly. V. 23. **And they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people,** having been obliged to overcome his diffidence, **he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward,** he extended above them, head and shoulders, a magnificent specimen of physical manhood, truly kingly in appearance. V. 24. **And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen,** the election being the confirmation of the previous divine choice, **that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted,** in a cry of salutation and homage, **God save the king!** literally, "May the king live!" V. 25. **Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom,** the relation of the temporal monarchy to the theocracy, the rule of God, for it was Jehovah's purpose to rule through Saul as His instrument, cp. Deut. 17, 14—20, **and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord,** to be preserved for future generations, the Lord Himself being a witness of the act. **And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.** V. 26. **And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched,** of their own free will they constituted themselves his body-guard, his escort of honor. They represented the majority of the people, who were willing to bow under the authority of the man whom God had chosen as their leader. V. 27. **But the children of Belial,** the worthless, vain rabble, **said, How shall this man save us?** They questioned his fitness for the office and declared their unwillingness to submit to his authority. **And they despised him and brought him no presents,** gifts which were a part of the regular income of the princes. **But he held his peace,** literally, "he was as a deaf man," paying no attention to these foolish attacks, and thus showing great foresight and prudence. To this day men in the public office of the Church are subjected to mocking attacks by vain and foolish people. The best way of meeting such a situation is by ignoring attacks of this kind; for the truly faithful, men whose hearts God has touched, will be on the side of right and justice.

CHAPTER 11.

Saul's Victory over the Ammonites.

The Summoning of the People. — V. 1. **Then Nahash, the Ammonite,** the king of the children of Ammon living in the territory east of Jordan, **came up,** undertook a campaign of war, very likely with the object of avenging his people for the defeat administered to them by Jephthah, Judg. 11, 32, **and encamped against Jabesh-gilead,** in the valley east of Jordan, about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea; **and all the men of Jabesh,** who were apparently suffering with the same lack of courage which caused their fathers to stay away from the campaign against Benjamin, Judg. 21, 8. 9, **said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.** They wanted to have some reasonable conditions under

which they could become tributaries to the Ammonites. This answer is characteristic of Israel's weakness, of the utter lack of a conscious and permanent union between the various tribes. It was a very loose confederacy indeed where such conditions were possible. V. 2. **And Nahash, the Ammonite,** with the arrogant cruelty which was characteristic of heathen conquerors, **answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you,** for this price he was willing to accept their complete submission, **that I may thrust out all your right eyes and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel,** to revenge the disgrace which Jephthah had brought upon the Ammonites and to give the entire nation a sample of the treatment awaiting all its members as soon as Nahash should have gained the supremacy. V. 3. **And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite,** so much time of grace he should mercifully grant them, **that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel,** throughout the boundaries, that is, the territory, of the tribes; **and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee,** forced to submit to his inhuman condition. V. 4. **Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul,** the residence of the elected king, who, however, at the time of their arrival, was not in the city, **and told the tidings in the ears of the people,** Saul's fellow-citizens; **and all the people lifted up their voices and wept,** in helpless sorrow over the fate which seemed to be threatening the people of Jabesh. V. 5. **And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field,** driving home the yoke of oxen with which he had been engaged on his farm during the day; **and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.** V. 6. **And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings,** as upon the Judges in the preceding period of Israel's history, **and his anger was kindled greatly,** it flared up in mighty wrath at the reproach inflicted by the enemy of his people. V. 7. **And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces,** according to the manner in which sacrificial animals were dissected, **and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers,** to every tribe, as in Judg. 19, 29. **saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel,** due honor thus being given to the authority of Samuel, **so shall it be done unto his oxen.** This punishment Saul could threaten in the exercise of his judicial power, as a function of his royal office. **And the fear of the Lord fell on the people,** namely, a dread lest they should offend God by refusing to obey the command of the king and of the prophet; **and they came out with one consent,** as one single man, in perfect unity of thought and action. V. 8. **And when he,** Saul, **numbered them in Bezek,** in the Plain of Jezreel, not far from the best northern ford over the Jordan, **the children of Israel were three hundred thousand,** that is, the northern tribes, which afterward formed a nation for themselves, **and the men of Judah thirty thousand.** A holy courage and zeal which knows no fear should be found in all those whom the Lord has called to be the leaders and pastors of His people.

The Utter Overthrow of the Ammonites. V. 9. **And they,** the men representing the army of Israel, **said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by that time the sun be hot,** before noon, **ye shall have help,** in being delivered from the power of their arrogant enemies. **And the messengers came and showed it to the men of Jabesh,** gave them the joyful information; **and they were glad.** V. 10. **Therefore the men of Jabesh said,** employing a stratagem which was to make the Ammonites overconfident, **To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you,** for this sounded as though they would surrender themselves unconditionally, not having been able to interest the rest of Israel. V. 11. **And it was so on the morrow that Saul put the people in three companies,** three attacking divisions; **and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch,** between three o'clock and dawn, when the night is darkest, **and slew the Ammonites,** who were caught and overpowered by surprise, **until the heat of the day; and it came to pass that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.** It was an utter rout, a complete overthrow of the invading army. V. 12. **And the people said unto Samuel,** when they had returned from their pursuit of the scattered enemies and were once more encamped, **Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? Bring the men that we may put them to death.** By virtue of his prophetic power, Samuel was to name the children of Belial, chap. 10, 27, who had sneered at Saul. The people were so enthusiastic over the victory gained under the leadership of Saul that they were ready to deal very summarily with men whom they regarded as traitors. V. 13. **And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.** This was not only tactful and magnanimous, but showed true piety of heart, which would not permit the sacred joy of the day of victory to be marred by bloodshed, since the victory of the foe was for him nothing but a saving act of God Himself. It was an utterance of royal generosity toward his personal enemies, whose hearts he wanted to win; it was a victory over himself. V. 14. **Then said Samuel to the people, Come and let**

us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there, by a solemn confirmation and open acknowledgment of the election as it took place in Mizpeh. V. 15. **And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal,** the entire nation, as one man, rendering him the homage which made him ruler over Israel in fact as well as in name; **and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings,** with which were connected joyful sacrificial meals, **before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.** So both the happy relation between the covenant God and Israel and the union of the tribes, welded together to form a perfect unit, was here celebrated. For a Christian it is self-evident that for everything which he has managed to perform by the strength and power of God he gives all honor to Jehovah alone.

CHAPTER 12.

Samuel's Farewell to Israel.

Samuel Protests His Integrity. — V. 1. **And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.** "His listening to the voice of the people was based on the repeated divine command and was an act of self-denying obedience to the will of God." (Lange.) These words introduced the farewell speech of Samuel, the climax of the joyful meeting at Gilgal. V. 2. **And now, behold, the king walketh before you,** having charge of the entire government of the people in peace and in war; **and I am old and gray-headed,** cp. chap. 8, 5; **and, behold, my sons are with you,** and the present change in government was evidently necessary, since he himself had felt the need of placing some of his burdens upon the shoulders of his sons; **and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day,** he had been in public office, and therefore in the eye of the people since his infancy. V. 3. **Behold, here I am; witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed,** the newly-elected king Saul: **Whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded,** namely, by using his power in a ruthless manner? **Whom have I oppressed,** by any form of violence, **or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith,** by taking ransom money in order to sell his favor and keep some criminal from the well-deserved punishment? **And I will restore it you.** In case any injustice, any mismanagement of office could be charged against him, he was willing to make public amends. His open challenge showed the serenity of his conscience, his consciousness of being innocent of any flagrant wrong-doing. V. 4. **And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.** It was a splendid testimonial of the entire people to the honesty and integrity of Samuel. V. 5. **And he said unto them,** his intention being to give to their testimonial the support of a solemn declaration before the Lord, **The Lord is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.** They accepted the solemn adjuration and supported their declaration by a statement having the force and weight of an oath. V. 6. **And Samuel,** in order to have the people realize still more deeply their ingratitude in rejecting a government which they themselves acknowledged as having been so praiseworthy, **said unto the people, It is the Lord, He is witness, that advanced Moses and Aaron,** made them what they were, gave them their place in history, **and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.** He had heard their declaration. which implied that they had, in the person of Samuel, who represented this covenant God, rejected Jehovah Himself, as Samuel now proceeds to show from their history. V. 7. **Now, therefore, stand still that I may reason with you,** as though he were conducting his own cause before a judge, **before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord,** God's blessings by reason of His covenant faithfulness, in fulfilment of His solemn promises, **which He did to you and to your fathers.** V. 8. **When Jacob was come into Egypt and your fathers cried unto the Lord,** at the time of the great oppression by the Egyptians, **then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place.** That was the first great act of God's covenant faithfulness, the deliverance out of the land of Egypt and the introduction into the Land of Promise. V. 9. **And when they forgat the Lord, their God,** in deliberate unfaithfulness and defection to the covenant, **He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor,** Judg. 4, 2, **and into the hand of the Philistines,** Judg. 10, 7; 13, 1, **and into the hand of the king of Moab,** Judg. 3, 12, **and they fought against them.** V. 10. **And they cried unto the Lord and said, We have sinned because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth,** this had been their confession whenever they had come to the full realization of their helpless plight, as being due to their unfaithfulness, Judg. 10, 10; **but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve Thee.**

V. 11. **And the Lord sent Jerubbaal**, that is, Gideon, Judg. 6, 14. 32, **and Bedan**, or Barak, Judg. 4, 6, **and Jephthah**, Judg. 11, 1, **and Samuel**, for the speaker could well mention his own name, since he was conscious of his high mission as Judge and deliverer of his people, this fact being generally recognized in Israel, chap. 3, 20, **and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe**, they were living in quiet and security. V. 12. **And when ye saw that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, came against you**, who thus had evidently made several raids against the territory of Israel before his bolder campaign against Jabesh, **ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us; when the Lord, your God, was your king**, who had, by awaking Judges and saviors, always delivered them out of the hands of their enemies. So their demand for a king had really been a bit of foolish caprice, of sinful rejection of the Lord. V. 13. **Now, therefore, behold the king whom ye have chosen**, in public, popular assembly, **and whom ye have desired! And, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.** Although their demand was not in accordance with God's plans at this time, Jehovah had granted them the king whom they wanted, who was a gracious gift from His hand. V. 14. **If ye will fear the Lord, and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord**, for He was still the highest Ruler in the nation and intended to have His government acknowledged without question, **then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following after the Lord, your God.** This is really in the nature of a most emphatic wish and prayer, that they might never cease holding to the Lord with all their hearts. V. 15. **But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you as it was against your fathers**, in spite of the king in whom they were placing so overmuch confidence. The mere fact that they now had a king did not guarantee them freedom from the oppressions with which they had battled in the past, for this could be attained only by an unwavering clinging to Jehovah. The congregation of the Lord is always in need of admonitions to repentance and obedience. If faithful preachers would not continue with rebuking, admonishing, warning, and pleading, disobedience and defection would soon be prevalent everywhere.

Samuel Admonishes the People to Steadfastness. — V. 16. **Now, therefore, stand and see this great thing**, a miracle in confirmation of Samuel's reproof and admonition, **which the Lord will do before your eyes.** This they were to experience at once, even now. V. 17. **Is it not wheat-harvest to-day**, the season at which rain was most unusual? **I will call unto the Lord, and He shall send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see**, by this sign, so distinctly at variance with the ordinary weather in Canaan, **that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord in asking you a king.** V. 18. **So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day**, as a manifestation of His anger and of His royal glory, in confirmation of Samuel's words. **And all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel**, they were filled with dread at this corroboration of the prophet's statements. V. 19. **And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord, thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king**, a request which they now finally understood as being an insult to the Lord. V. 20. **And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness**, that was indeed not to be denied, and this fact was to keep them in wholesome repentance; **yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart**, in undivided, complete devotion; v. 21. **and turn ye not aside**, after idolatrous vanities which were bound to bring harm; **for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.** The reference is to the idols which had so often been a snare to the children of Israel. V. 22. **For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake**, since His own glory was at stake; **because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people**, and He would be careful to guard against every blasphemy of His holy name. V. 23. **Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.** There was no personal resentment on the part of Samuel, for he wanted to continue, as heretofore, to serve them in his prophetic office, both by prayer and by instruction. V. 24. **Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth**, without the slightest hypocrisy, **with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you.** With the remembrance of His great deeds before them always, as they knew them from the history of their people, they would be urged to keep on the right way. V. 25. **But if ye shall still do wickedly**, in spite of all Samuel's admonitions, **ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king**, for the Lord on high is a King of kings and a Lord of lords. If Christians will at all times keep the great deeds of God for their salvation before their eyes, they will find it an easy matter to remain meek and humble in following the Lord's commands in His power.

CHAPTER 13.

Saul's Disobedience.

The Invasion of the Philistines. — V. 1. **Saul reigned one year,** literally, "A son of [probably forty] years was Saul when he became king"; **and when he had reigned two years over Israel** (he was king, as nearly as can be estimated, twenty-two years), v. 2. **Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel,** evidently from the total number of those who were able to bear arms; **whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash,** some eight miles northeast of Jerusalem, **and in Mount Bethel,** the range on which the old Bethel lay, **and a thousand were with Jonathan,** the valiant son of Saul, **in Gibeah of Benjamin; and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent,** he dismissed them to their homes. V. 3. **And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba,** on the hill near his home town, chap. 10, 5, thereby taking the offensive against the invaders; **and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear;** the Israelites, especially those living west of Jordan, should know of Jonathan's heroic exploit, arouse themselves to action against the oppressors, and fight for their freedom. V. 4. **And all Israel heard say that Saul,** who is named as the chief commander of the military forces of Israel, **had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines,** literally, "was ill-smelling," Gen. 34, 30, said of one who is thoroughly despised and hated. **And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal,** summoned to the old mustering-place to make ready for the campaign against the Philistines. V. 5. **And the Philistines gathered themselves together,** they quickly mobilized an army, **to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots,** or, one thousand, as the text seems originally to have had, **and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude; and they came up,** from the lowlands of Philistia, **and pitched in Michmash,** where Saul had first been stationed, **eastward from Beth-aven,** literally, "over against, in front of, Beth-aven," which itself was east of Michmash, Josh. 7, 2. V. 6. **When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait,** in a most difficult and dangerous position, **(for the people were distressed,** oppressed by the enemy, who robbed and plundered as they chose,) **then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets,** secluded places in thorny undergrowth, **and in rocks,** in clefts and caves of the hills, **and in high places,** strongly built towers in lonely situations, **and in pits.** V. 7. **And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead,** the territory of the two and one half tribes. **As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal,** in the lowlands near Jordan, **and all the people,** the soldiers summoned to duty against the oppressors, **followed him trembling,** literally, "they trembled after him," utterly lacking in the spirit necessary to throw off the yoke of the tyrants. It was a time of trial for Saul and for all Israel, a period such as comes upon all Christians from time to time, to test their faith.

Saul's Unauthorized Sacrifice. — V. 8. **And he,** Saul, **tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed,** chap. 10, 8; **but Samuel came not to Gilgal,** not even on the morning of the seventh day; **and the people were scattered from him,** fearing that Samuel, after all, would not put in his appearance. V. 9. **And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me and peace-offerings,** both to atone for the sins of the people and to establish their fellowship with Jehovah once more. **And he offered the burnt offering,** very likely through the priests who were at Gilgal. V. 10. **And it came to pass that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came,** evidently still before the close of the seventh day; **and Saul went out to meet him that he might salute him,** with the customary greeting of peace and blessing. V. 11. **And Samuel said,** knowing that Saul had not waited the full length of the appointed time, **What hast thou done? And Saul said,** in a feeble attempt to excuse his overhasty action, **Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash,** v. 12. **therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal,** in a sudden descent with superior forces, **and I have not made supplication unto the Lord,** literally, "stroked or entreated His face," namely, with the object of gaining His grace and favor. **I forced myself, therefore,** the word used by Saul intimating a strong inward conflict which preceded his resolution to go ahead without the presence of Samuel, **and offered a burnt offering.** V. 13. **And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord, thy God, which He commanded thee,** no excuse could alter the fact of his disobedience; **for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom,** namely, as a hereditary kingdom, **upon Israel forever,** if Saul had only followed His commandment strictly. V. 14. **But now thy kingdom shall not continue,** it would not pass on to his sons, Saul would be the first and last of his line. **The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart,** this resolution had already been passed in the

counsels of God, **and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people,** as the successor of Saul, **because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee,** he had not stood the test of absolute faith and trust in Jehovah; for he should have known that the Lord would find ways and means to bring Samuel within the limit of the time set or otherwise to send him word concerning the delay. V. 15. **And Samuel arose,** after having made this statement, **and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin,** the home of Saul. **And Saul,** before continuing his campaign, **numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.** That was all that was left, in spite of his hasty sacrifice; he had indeed acted foolishly, as Samuel had said. V. 16. **And Saul and Jonathan, his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin,** or rather, in Geba, at the place where Jonathan had broken up the Philistine garrison; **but the Philistines encamped in Michmash,** v. 5. Disobedience is the consequence of unbelief and doubt. Whenever Christians are put to a test, no matter how long the time of distress and tribulation lasts, they should simply cling to God's Word and promises, for disobedience may quickly be followed by rejection.

The Oppression of the Philistines. — V. 17. **And the spoilers,** soldiers to whom was assigned the task of plundering and devastating the land of Israel, **came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual,** toward the northeast, through the territory of Benjamin and Ephraim; v. 18. **and another company turned the way to Beth-horon,** toward the west; **and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness,** in a southeasterly direction. V. 19. **Now, there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears;** so the Philistines had removed all smiths out of the whole country; v. 20. **but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock.** So all the agricultural implements which the Israelites used, plowshares, hoes, axes, were sharpened by Philistine smiths, upon whom the subject people were altogether dependent. V. 21. **Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.** The verses have lately been rendered: "But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his plowshare, and his ax, and his adze, and his hoe, and the price was a *pim* for the plowshares, and for the axes, and for the three-tined forks, and for the adzes, and for the setting of the goads." Whenever the implements became dull and needed sharpening, and whenever the ox-goads needed new setting, it was necessary to make the trip to the lowlands occupied by the Philistines, who permitted the Hebrews to carry on the tillage only of the highlands and of the valley of the Jordan, and incidentally charged the Israelites a high price for all the work done by them.[3] V. 22. **So it came to pass in the day of battle,** which is described in the next chapter, **that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan,** they were unprovided with real weapons of war, being dependent upon their farm implements for arms against the enemy; **but with Saul and with Jonathan, his son, was there found,** they were the only ones that had real weapons. V. 23. **And the garrison of the Philistines,** a post or vanguard from the main army, **went out to the passage,** or pass, **of Michmash,** as a protection against the Israelites, who might otherwise have slipped up through some of the valleys converging at this point and surprised the Philistine camp. The invariable result of forsaking the Lord is distress and tribulation, the object of such visitations being to cause the backsliders to repent of their sins and to place their full reliance upon the Lord.

3) Cp. Barton, *Archeology and the Bible,* 161.

CHAPTER 14.

Jonathan's Heroic Feat.

The Philistines Defeated. — V. 1. **Now it came to pass upon a day,** a certain day came along, **that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison,** the advanced post which was to guard against surprise attacks on the part of the Israelites, chap. 13, 23, **that is on the other side. But he told not his father,** who probably would have forbidden the undertaking as too dangerous. V. 2. **And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah,** at the extreme northern edge of the city, **under a pomegranate-tree which is in Migron,** the place which he had chosen being apparently well adapted for military purposes, since it was on the edge of a precipice; **and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;** v. 3. **and Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother,** chap. 4, 21, **the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's**

priest in Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was still standing, although the ark was near Kirjath-jearim, wearing an ephod, performing the functions of the high priest. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone, it was a secret expedition on his part. V. 4. And between the passages, the various passes which were made possible by several side valleys at that point, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, a pillarlike rock with steep sides, and a sharp rock on the other side; and the name of the one was Bozez and the name of the other Seneh, and these columns guarded the pass. V. 5. The forefront, the highest crag, of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. V. 6. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised, the name which the Jews usually applied to the heathen that were their enemies; it may be that the Lord will work for us, in helping them overcome their enemies; for there is no restraint to the Lord, He is at perfect liberty, to save by many or by few. Jonathan's resolution was based upon the firm conviction that Israel was the people of God and that Jehovah was its almighty Lord, who would not refuse His children His assistance against the enemies of His kingdom if only they would place their trust firmly in Him. V. 7. And his armor-bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart, cheerfully and courageously carrying out his intention. Turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. V. 8. Then said Jonathan, proposing a sign by which he could tell whether the Lord approved of his undertaking or not, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them, purposely letting the Philistines see them as they advanced. V. 9. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you, this showing that they had plenty of courage for attacking; then we will stand still in our place and will not go up unto them. V. 10. But if they say thus, Come up unto us, this showing that they did not have the courage to abandon their position, no matter how boastfully they talked, then we will go up, for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand; and this shall be a sign unto us. V. 11. And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines, boldly showed themselves as they advanced; and the Philistines said, voicing their scornful contempt for the Israelites in general, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves, chap. 13, 6. V. 12. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing, their very scornful overconfidence making them unfit for battle. And Jonathan said unto his armor-bearer, Come up after me; for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. V. 13. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, scaling the steep cliff, and his armor-bearer after him; and they, the enemies, fell before Jonathan, he struck them down as he went along; and his armor-bearer slew after him, finishing the task left uncompleted by Jonathan. V. 14. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow, literally, "in about a half-furrow of a yoke of land," the ground plowed by a yoke of oxen in half a day. The twenty men, fleeing before Jonathan, were killed and lay in a row of that length along the ridge. V. 15. And there was trembling in the host, in the main camp, in the field, and among all the people, in the entire army; the garrison, the men of the outposts, and the spoilers, the companies of plunderers, they also trembled, the panic of fright spreading by quick contagion, and the earth quaked, under the confused uproar of the Philistines; so it was a very great trembling, a terror of God, sent upon the Philistines for their destruction. V. 16. And the watchmen of Saul, the sentinels, in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, thrown into confusion by Jonathan's attack, they dispersed hither and thither, they were disorganized and broken up, and they went on beating down one another, they were tossed to and fro and continued to be slain. V. 17. Then said Saul, whose attention had been called to the confusion in the enemy's camp, unto the people that were with him, Number now, call the roll, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. V. 18. And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel; it was often taken along to war, as being a symbol of God's presence. V. 19. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, in the effort to get some statement of God, that the noise, the confused tumult, that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased; and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand; there was no need of a special revelation, the course which he ought to take was obvious. V. 20. And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, raised the battle-cry, and they came to the battle, advancing against the enemy; and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great dis-

comfiture, a headless confusion. V. 21. **Moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time,** either prisoners or levies serving in their army, **which went up with them into the camp from the country round about,** they went over to Israel and turned their arms against their oppressors, **even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.** V. 22. **Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim,** whose ranges extended down to this neighborhood, **when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in battle.** V. 23. **So the Lord saved Israel that day,** it was an obvious display of His power; **and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven,** it continued, at least for a large part of the army, in a northeasterly direction. If in the battles which the Church of the Lord must wage only a few men take the lead with a courageous stand, others will follow, and even the weak and those of little faith are inspired to stand on the Lord's side.

Saul's Unwise Adjuration. — V. 24. **And the men of Israel were distressed that day,** harassed, thoroughly wearied; **for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening that I may be avenged on mine enemies.** This was an act of false zeal, unauthorized by the Lord, Saul having more regard to his royal power than to the honor of Jehovah. **So none of the people tasted any food,** although they were jaded to the point of exhaustion. V. 25. **And all they of the land,** namely, those who had now joined the forces of Saul, **came to a wood,** into a forested section of the hills; **and there was honey upon the ground,** flowing down in streams from the overloaded hives of wild bees. V. 26. **And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped,** running down from the trees where the bees had stored it; **but no man put his hand to his mouth,** to eat any of the honey; **for the people feared the oath.** V. 27. **But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath,** he was not aware of the curse; **wherefore he put forth,** while hastily passing by, **the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in an honeycomb,** one visible in the structure of the bees, **and put his hand, with which he had removed the honey from the rod, to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened,** the slight refreshment revived his strength, and this showed in the glow of his eyes. V. 28. **Then answered one of the people and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day; and the people were,** rather, are, **faint.** It was a timid protest against Saul's rash order. V. 29. **Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land,** brought disaster to the army of Israel and to all whom they represented; **see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened because I tasted a little of this honey.** V. 30. **How much more, if haply,** by any means, **the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?** Had the soldiers had nourishing food, they would have been in condition to inflict a much more severe defeat upon the Philistines. V. 31. **And they smote the Philistines that day,** those who had not fled toward Beth-aven, **from Michmash to Aijalon,** far in the western foothills; **and the people were very faint,** weary to the point of utter exhaustion. V. 32. **And the people, as soon as it was evening, flew upon the spoil,** in a ravenous desire for food, **and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people did eat them with the blood,** too impatient to let the blood drain out according to God's command, Lev. 19, 26. This was the result of Saul's unwise adjuration. V. 33. **Then they told Saul, saying, Behold the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed,** their conduct being faithlessness to the covenant of Jehovah; **roll a great stone unto me this day,** right now. V. 34. **And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox and every man his sheep, and slay them here,** where the blood could drain off properly, **and eat; and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night and slew them there.** V. 35. **And Saul built an altar unto the Lord,** apparently as a monument of the great victory; **the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord.** V. 36. **And Saul said,** after the people had once more been strengthened through the food which they ate, **Let us go down after the Philistines by night and spoil them,** take more booty, **until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them.** Saul seems to have been aware of the fact that his rash order had been foolish, and therefore wanted to make up for lost time. **And they,** his counselors, or the people, **said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Ahiah, Let us draw near hither unto God,** to consult Him by means of the Urim and Thummim and thus to get His decision. V. 37. **And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt Thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But He answered him not that day,** at that time, this being an indication that the Lord had turned from the people and withdrawn His assistance. V. 38.

And Saul said, pursuing the hint given him by the silence of Jehovah, **Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people,** the representatives, probably the elders, Num. 11, 30; **and know and see wherein this sin,** indicated by the silence of Jehovah, **hath been this day.** V. 39. **For, as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan, my son, he shall surely die.** This was another rash oath, and just as foolish as the first. **But there was not a man among all the people that answered him,** evidently from terror regarding the consequences. V. 40. **Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan, my son, will be on the other side,** namely, in the casting of lots to determine the guilty one. **And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.** V. 41. **Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot,** exemption from punishment, establish the truth. **And Saul and Jonathan were taken; but the people escaped,** they went out free, the lot did not accuse them. V. 42. **And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan, my son. And Jonathan was taken,** discovered as the one on whom, in Saul's opinion, rested the fault. V. 43. **Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die;** he was ready to pay the penalty, although in this case, since the mere command of a man was concerned, the guilt really fell on him who gave the foolish order. V. 44. **And Saul answered,** with another unwarranted oath, **God do so and more also; for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.** V. 45. **And the people,** rousing themselves from their attitude of apparent indifference and silent submission at last, **said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel?** They regarded his great victory as a direct evidence of God's favor and assistance. **God forbid! As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day,** he was obviously a tool in the hand of God. **So the people rescued Jonathan,** from the fate which was threatening him, **that he died not.** V. 46. **Then Saul went up from following the Philistines,** he did not continue the pursuit; **and the Philistines,** by no means permanently disabled, **went to their own place,** to their own country. The cause of the Lord's silence was evidently not Jonathan's conduct, but Saul's own arbitrary and rash act. If men profess to seek God's glory and honor, but at the same time take His name in vain time and again, the Lord often punishes them by letting them continue in their foolishness.

Saul's Campaigns. — V. 47. **So Saul took the kingdom over Israel,** he was now really established in his royal power, **and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom,** south of the Dead Sea, **and against the kings of Zobah,** a district of Syria between the Euphrates and the Orontes, **and against the Philistines,** whose power was not yet broken; **and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them,** he chastised them, he punished them for their attacks on Israel. V. 48. **And he gathered an host,** he increased in strength and made his power felt, **and smote the Amalekites,** the desert tribes in the South, **and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them,** making an end to their raids against the territory of Israel. V. 49. **Now, the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the first-born Merab, and the name of the younger Michal;** v. 50. **and the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle,** and thus his own cousin. V. 51. **And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner, the father of Abner, was the son of Abiel.** V. 52. **And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and, for this reason, when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man,** who would probably make a good soldier, **he took him unto him.** Even men whom God has rejected as His children are still used by Him in performing His will in the world.

CHAPTER 15.

The Campaign against Amalek.

The Unauthorized Action of Saul. — V. 1. **Samuel also said unto Saul,** in delivering to him the Lord's commission, **The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel; now, therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.** As the king of Israel by God's direct selection, Saul was bound to carry out the commands of God, the real King of His people. V. 2. **Thus saith the Lord of hosts,** the almighty Ruler of armies, **I remember that which Amalek did to Israel,** during the desert journey, **how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt,** Ex. 17, 8. 14. The Amalekites were a roving desert-people, descendants of Esau's grandson, Gen. 36, 12; 16, and very decidedly hostile to Israel. V. 3.

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, as devoted to the Lord, in a campaign of annihilation, **and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.** The entire people with all their possessions were placed under the ban, as being destined for destruction. V. 4. **And Saul gathered the people together,** summoning them for service in war, **and numbered,** mustered, **them in Telaim,** in the southern country, midway between Beersheba and the Dead Sea, **two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah,** for there was need of a mighty army in conquering a strong confederation of Bedouin tribes. V. 5. **And Saul came to a city of Amalek,** evidently their largest camp, **and laid wait in the valley,** set an ambush before venturing an attack. V. 6. **And Saul said unto the Kenites,** a small tribe of nomads friendly to Israel, with whom they had come up from the wilderness under the leadership of Hobab, Judg. 1, 16, **Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt,** Num. 10, 29. **So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.** V. 7. **And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur,** all along the southern boundary of Canaan, well into Arabia Petrea, **that is over against,** east of, **Egypt.** V. 8. **And he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword,** so that the power of their confederation was broken for many years. V. 9. **But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings,** those of the second brood, commonly considered the best, **and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them,** taking them, instead, as their booty; **but everything that was vile and refuse,** which had little or no value, **that they destroyed utterly.** Partial obedience is equivalent to total disobedience, and such a course of action inevitably brings upon the transgressors God's punishment.

Samuel's Reproof. — V. 10. **Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying,** v. 11. **It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king,** an expression which denotes that God had found it necessary to change His mode of action into the opposite of what He had determined under the condition of holy and righteous conduct of men; **for he is turned back from following Me and hath not performed My commandments.** Pride and self-will, in the consciousness of his own power in Israel, had caused Saul to disregard the divine charge. **And it grieved Samuel, it hurt him bitterly to find that Saul had turned away from the Lord, it kindled a holy anger in his heart; and he cried unto the Lord all night,** probably to obtain for Saul forgiveness for his disobedience. V. 12. **And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning,** setting out to call Saul to account, as the Lord had commanded, **it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel,** southeast of Hebron, **and, behold, he set him up a place,** a monument to commemorate the victory, **and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal,** in the valley of Jordan. V. 13. **And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord,** a greeting of hypocritical friendliness; **I have performed the commandment of the Lord,** a calm assurance intended to throw sand into Samuel's eyes. V. 14. **And Samuel,** losing no time in unmasking the hypocrisy of Saul, **said, What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?** V. 15. **And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites,** so much he had to concede, though it appears even here that he wants to put the blame on the people; **for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen,** they were the transgressors, while he was blameless, **to sacrifice unto the Lord, thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.** The untruth and hypocrisy of this excuse were evident at once, as well as the selfish interests, for the thank-offerings were always combined with sacrificial meals. V. 16. **Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay,** he should desist from lying excuses, **and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.** V. 17. **And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight,** for so Saul had described himself when Samuel first met him, chap. 9, 21, **wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?** V. 18. **And the Lord sent thee on a journey and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites,** who were so persistent in their hostility against Israel and against Jehovah, **and fight against them until they be consumed.** V. 19. **Wherefore, then,** after this plain command, **didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil,** in eager greed, in passionate craving, **and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?** V. 20. **And Saul said unto Samuel,** still persisting in his denial of any blame on his part, **Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.** It was a further hypocritical self-justification. V. 21. **But the people,** upon whom Saul again lays all the blame, **took of the spoil, sheep and**

oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, the firstlings of the devoted things, **to sacrifice unto the Lord, thy God, in Gilgal.** Saul evaded the plain words of the Lord that everything was to be put under the ban, and that therefore the animals could no longer be used for burnt offerings. V. 22. **And Samuel saith, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?** A mechanical worship without true loyalty of the heart is not acceptable to Him. **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.** This principle, of the utter worthlessness of a dead worship, especially when it goes side by side with a lack of obedience to the Lord, has held in the Church of God at all times, and should be considered most carefully by all those whose churchgoing is a matter of mere routine. V. 23. **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,** or divination, the service of demons in any form, **and stubbornness,** in refusing to obey God's commands, **is as iniquity and idolatry,** in which the living God is denied and rejected. **Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king,** Saul was abandoned to his pride, selfishness, and wickedness. He who opposes the Word of the Lord in any way, whether by speaking or by doing, thereby denies the true God and is in danger of being rejected.

Saul's Humiliation. — V. 24. **And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned,** this confession was extorted from him by fear, but was not an expression of true penitence; **for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice,** he had loved the honor and favor of men more than the favor and good will of God. V. 25. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord.** He did not really acknowledge his guilt, but wanted the good will of Samuel again, lest he be publicly rejected and ousted from his position of king, a disgrace which he felt would be all the harder to bear since he had already been told that the position of king would not be hereditary in his family, chap. 13, 14. V. 26. **And Samuel,** who knew that even the repentance of Saul was feigned and insincere, **said unto Saul, I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel,** in the sight of God he no longer occupied that position. V. 27. **And as Samuel turned about to go away, he,** Saul, **laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle,** evidently with the intention of holding him back by force, **and it rent.** V. 28. **And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou.** This much was even now decided in the counsel of the Lord, although even Samuel did not yet know who Saul's successor would be. V. 29. **And also the Strength of Israel,** the Lord, who is the Refuge, the Confidence of Israel, **will not lie nor repent,** He would not change this judicial sentence with the penalty of rejection; **for He is not a man that He should repent,** Num. 23, 19. V. 30. **Then he said, I have sinned,** a hollow sound without true sorrow of heart; **yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord, thy God.** Saul was concerned chiefly about his own honor, for he had only one fear, namely, that his authority and influence would be lost in case the people would find out about the open breach between him and Samuel. V. 31. **So Samuel turned again after Saul,** not only for the purpose of maintaining outward order in the nation and of preventing anarchy, but also to carry out the sentence of death upon Agag; **and Saul worshiped the Lord,** he observed this outward formality. V. 32. **Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately,** in a cheerful mood. **And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past,** which may have been an attempt at heroism in the face of death, or a hope that Samuel would spare him. V. 33. **And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women;** he was but receiving his just reward for his cruelties. **And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal,** he carried out Jehovah's sentence of destruction upon him. V. 34. **Then Samuel went to Ramah,** to his home; **and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.** V. 35. **And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death,** all intercourse with the rejected king on his side ceased from now on; **nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul; and the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel.** Although Samuel had loved Saul, yet, since the latter had now been rejected as king, he could do nothing to effect a change of heart in him. A feigned repentance is the climax of hypocrisy and only tends to confirm the Lord's sentence of rejection.

CHAPTER 16.

David Chosen King.

David Anointed by Samuel. — V. 1. **And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?** Samuel had yielded to excessive grief over the condition of affairs, for his anxiety concerning the welfare of Israel and his worry over Saul's hardness of heart had put him out of sympathy with God's hidden ways; hence the reproof. **Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons,** Jehovah had looked them over and chosen one of them. V. 2. **And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me,** since he would consider the act as treachery and revolt, believing himself still to be the rightful king of Israel. **And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord,** for apparently it was nothing unusual for the prophet to hold divine services in various parts of Israel, especially now that Shiloh was desecrated. V. 3. **And call Jesse to the sacrifice,** inviting him to take part in the sacrificial meal as his own special guest, **and I will show thee what thou shalt do,** give him immediate directions, reveal His will at the time; **and thou shalt anoint unto Me him whom I name unto thee.** This involved no falsehood, but its chief object was to conceal the main reason of Samuel's coming from such as had no authority to know of it. V. 4. **And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?** Samuel had evidently held visitations from time to time and earnestly rebuked any wrongs and evil conditions which he found. V. 5. **And he said, Peaceably,** he had no special occasion to rebuke them; **I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord; sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice,** the celebration being intended to strengthen the people's fellowship with Jehovah. **And he sanctified Jesse and his sons,** addressing this admonition to them in particular, so they would be sure to wash themselves and put on clean garments, **and called them to the sacrifice,** as his own special guests. V. 6. **And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab,** the first-born, **and,** being impressed by his appearance and bearing, **said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him,** this thought immediately arose in his heart. V. 7. **But the Lord said unto Samuel,** giving an answer to his spirit, **Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature,** on the fact that he was a handsome, stalwart young man; **because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth,** He has different standards of judgment; **for man looketh on the outward appearance,** judging from what he can see, **but the Lord looketh on the heart,** judging by the disposition of the soul, proving the heart and the reins. This is a general truth which applies to the relation of God to men at all times. God, knowing the inward thoughts of men, is unfailing in His judgment. V. 8. **Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel,** for the purpose of careful inspection. **And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.** V. 9. **Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.** V. 10. **Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel,** that is, a total of seven, including the three oldest. **And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these.** V. 11. **And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.** As the youngest he had to stand back and take charge of the chores, while his older brothers made ready to go to the sacrificial feast. **And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down,** literally, "surround," namely, the table, to partake of the meal, **till he come hither.** V. 12. **And he sent and brought him in. Now, he was ruddy,** said of the red color of his hair, which is unusual in the Orient, **and withal of a beautiful countenance,** with bright eyes and a clear look, **and goodly to look to,** handsome and stalwart of body as well. **And the Lord said,** announcing His decision to the thoughts of Samuel, **Arise, anoint him; for this is he,** chosen by the Lord in spite of his youth. V. 13. **Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren,** they were witnesses of the solemn act; **and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward,** he received a special endowment with gifts and powers for his royal calling, so that he was gradually led forward to full development, to complete fitness for his life's work. **So Samuel rose up and went to Ramah,** back to his home. It is probable that the significance of the ceremony was not made known to the other sons of Jesse, who may have been under the impression that David was simply to be regarded as a pupil of the great prophet. But the Lord's will went forward in due time. It happens quite often that the Lord chooses men for His work who are without honor before men. But just such instruments He fills with His Spirit, making them fit to perform the work of their high calling.

David Plays for Saul. — V. 14. **But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul,** now

that his rejection was an established fact, and **an evil spirit from the Lord**, having been given permission to that effect by the Lord, **troubled him**, fell upon him and terrified him, filled him with anxious worry and a nameless dread. It was a wicked power, which had a strange control over him. V. 15. **And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God**, sent as a punishment from God, **troubleth thee.** V. 16. **Let our lord now command thy servants which are before thee to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp, a skilful harpist; and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well**, for the soothing influence of music was known even at that time. V. 17. **And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me**, for he was glad to try this method of alleviating his trouble. V. 18. **Then answered one of the servants and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, a skilful harpist, and a mighty, valiant man, full of bravery and of a warlike spirit, and a man of war**, apparently fit to be a good soldier, **and prudent in matters**, eloquent of speech, **and a comely person**, strong and handsome, **and the Lord is with him.** The recommendation shows all the characteristics which later appeared in the history of David. V. 19. **Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse and said, Send me David, thy son, which is with the sheep**, Saul thus making use of his kingly prerogative in pressing men into his personal service. V. 20. **And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle, a skin, of wine, and a kid, as presents to the king, and sent them by David, his son, unto Saul**, presents of this kind being a sign of obedience and subjection. V. 21. **And David came to Saul and stood before him**, as his servant; **and he**, Saul, **loved him greatly; and he became his armorbearer**, being trained for military service. V. 22. **And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me**, continue in the king's service; **for he hath found favor in my sight.** V. 23. **And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul**, when he had special attacks of his affliction, when the gloomy moods were upon him, **that David took an harp and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed and was well, he found relief, and the evil spirit departed from him.** David's story shows that the Lord leads His children in marvelous ways. Those who are intended for servants in His kingdom are so guided by Him that all they see, hear, learn, and experience is of value to them for their future calling.

CHAPTER 17.

David's Victory over Goliath.

Goliath's Defiance of Israel. —V. 1. **Now, the Philistines**, the federation of the five city-states, **gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah**, some ten miles southwest of Jerusalem, **and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim**, in a range of hills which gave their camp a good strategic position. V. 2. **And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and pitched by the Valley of Elah**, in the Terebinth Valley, northeast of the Philistine position, **and set the battle in array against the Philistines.** V. 3. **And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side**, literally, "towards the mountain," on the higher slopes, **and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side; and there was a valley between them**, the deeper bed of the brook. V. 4. **And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines**, one of the few descendants of the giant race left by Joshua, Josh. 11, 22, **named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits** and a span (about nine feet and nine inches). V. 5. **And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed, clothed, with a coat of mail**, a scale-corselet made of overlapping metal plates; **and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass** (a copper shekel being a little less than half an ounce, the total weight probably some 150 pounds). V. 6. **And he had greaves of brass upon his legs**, where his coat of mail did not extend, **and a target of brass**, a copper lance, or javelin, **between his shoulders.** V. 7. **And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron** (about seventeen pounds); **and one bearing a shield went before him**, for the great shield was needed only when the soldier was on the defensive. V. 8. **And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel**, the divisions and companies as they were set up in battle array, **and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me**, to the valley beneath the hillside where the Israelites were standing in battle-line. V. 9. **If he be able to fight with me and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then shall ye be our**

servants and serve us. So Goliath's proposal was to have the entire matter decided by single combat, since he felt sure that the outcome would be in favor of the Philistines. V. 10. **And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day,** by issuing his challenge in this manner; **give me a man that we may fight together.** The contempt lay in the expression "slaves of Saul" and was expressed with all the greater boldness, since there was no answer on the part of Israel. V. 11. **When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed,** cast down, terrified, **and greatly afraid.** "Israel is afraid because its king is. They dare not in childlike spirit appropriate the promises of Jehovah. The wings that should bear them up in trustful upsoaring to the Lord of hosts are crippled."

David Sent to the Camp. — V. 12. **Now, David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons; and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul,** he was advanced in years and consequently felt the weakness of old age. V. 13. **And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle,** they were in the army which had been summoned to repel the invaders; **and the names of his three sons that went to battle were Eliab, the first-born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah,** chap. 16, 6—9. V. 14. **And David was the youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul.** V. 15. **But David went and returned from Saul,** he went back and forth between his home and the king's court, just as Saul had need of him, **to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem,** he helped out at home as much as possible, especially now that Saul had gone forth on the campaign against the Philistines. He had indeed been enrolled among Saul's armor-bearers, but he had not yet been drilled in the art of warfare as it was then practised. V. 16. **And the Philistine drew near morning and evening and presented himself forty days.** V. 17. **And Jesse said unto David, his son,** during these forty days, **Take now for thy brethren an ephah** (about 26 quarts) **of this parched corn,** roasted peas or grain, **and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;** v. 18. **and carry these ten cheeses,** portions of curds, probably on the order of cottage-cheese, **unto the captain of their thousand,** under whose command his brothers were, **and look how thy brethren fare,** inquiring after their welfare, **and take their pledge,** some personal token which would assure the father that they were indeed well. V. 19. **Now, Saul and they,** the sons of Jesse, **and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.** This remark belongs to the instructions which Jesse addressed to David. V. 20. **And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper,** faithful to his charge also in this, **and took, and went as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench,** the wagon-rampart which served for a fortification of the camp, **as the host was going forth to the fight,** to be set up in battle array, **and shouted for the battle,** raised their war-cry, to encourage their own ranks and to terrify the enemies in case they should contemplate an attack. V. 21. **For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army,** in readiness for the battle which was expected every day. V. 22. **And David left his carriage,** the load which he had come to deliver, **in the hand of the keeper of the carriage,** the officer in charge of the army's baggage, **and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren,** asking for his brothers, inquiring after their well-being. V. 23. **And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words,** as he usually did; **and David heard them.** V. 24. **And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid,** the very sight of the man filled them with such fear and trembling that they were unable to give battle. V. 25. **And the men of Israel said,** after the manner of men discussing a great calamity, **Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely to defy Israel is he come up,** to challenge them to single combat with a contemptuous sneer; **and it shall be that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel,** exempt from taxes and every form of public service. This was the promise of Saul in a public proclamation, intended to inspire some man with the courage to risk his life in battle. V. 26. **And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel,** which was daily heaped upon the entire people by this contemptuous challenge? **For who is this uncircumcised Philistine,** a man outside of the covenant with Jehovah, **that he should defy the armies of the living God?** The main thought in David's mind was this, that the insult offered to Israel, the people of Jehovah, must be wiped out at all costs. V. 27. **And the people answered him after this manner,** in agreement with the proclamation of the king, as before, **saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.** V. 28. **And Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men, and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither, from**

the higher ranges near Bethlehem? **And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?** He intimated that their family could ill afford to lose the few heads of small cattle which they owned. His zeal was blinded by envy and jealousy. **I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.** The intimation was that David was not satisfied with his lowly calling, that he wished to rise above his station and take part in the war, since his wickedness enjoyed the brutality of the battle. Eliab's is a type of a small soul, incapable of great thoughts and deeds. V. 29. **And David said,** in a quiet, but very decided denial of the wrong charged to him, **What have I now done? Is there not a cause?** He surely had a right to ask a simple question. V. 30. **And he turned from him,** letting his oldest brother stand in his pitiful smallness, **toward another and spake after the same manner; and the people answered him again after the former manner.** V. 31. **And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul,** in a respectful announcement; **and he sent for him,** he had David brought before him. David is a type of a simple believer, who performs his work in all simplicity, showing himself faithful even in the smallest details which are entrusted to him.

David Slays Goliath. — V. 32. **And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him,** Goliath, no man's courage must fail on his account, the entire army should lay aside its fear; **thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.** It was a simple, modest offer to undertake that single combat to which Goliath had been challenging. V. 33. **And Saul,** who was decidedly lacking in the divine courage needed for Jehovah's battles, **said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth,** a young man, and not versed in the arts of war, **and he a man of war from his youth,** trained in the use of arms from early childhood. V. 34. **And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear,** the reference being to two different occasions, **and took a lamb out of the flock;** v. 35. **and I went out after him,** in either case, **and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard,** this applying to the lion, **and smote him,** probably with his shepher's staff, **and slew him.** V. 36. **Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them,** shall share the fate of these two ravenous beasts, **seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God,** that being David's chief reason for believing that the covenant God would not abandon His people's cause, since it was really His honor which was at stake. V. 37. **David said, moreover, The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.** David's courage thus rested on his faith and trust in the mighty help of the Lord, for whose honor he intended to battle. **And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.** V. 38. **And Saul armed David with his armor,** had him try on special garments intended to be worn with the armor, **and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.** V. 39. **And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it,** he had never made an attempt to move about in heavy armor of this kind, but found it too unwieldy for his inexperienced arms and body. **And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them,** he did not possess the skill to handle them. **And David put them off him.** V. 40. **And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook,** down in the valley, **and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had,** in a special kit which he carried with him, **even in a scrip,** a pouch or pocket; **and his sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine,** equipped only with his shepherd's implements. V. 41. **And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.** V. 42. **And when the Philistine looked about and saw David,** took note of him for the first time, **he disdained him,** gave him only a contemptuous glance; **for he was but a youth,** still a young man, **and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.** V. 43. **And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?** the exaggeration purposely expressing his contempt. **And the Philistine cursed David by his gods,** adding blasphemy to his contempt. V. 44. **And the Philistine said to David, Come to me,** let him but dare to undertake an attack, **and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field.** To his scornful defiance he added a bloodthirsty threat. V. 45. **Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield,** on these the Philistine relied to give him the victory; **but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.** David's courage was based entirely upon his faith in the covenant God and His almighty power. V. 46. **This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand,** in an utterly helpless state; **and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto**

the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, namely, the one true God, Jehovah, who alone has the outcome of the battle in His hand. V. 47. **And all this assembly,** the entire army of Israel, **shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear,** that He is not dependent upon external mighty means to gain the victory; **for the battle is the Lord's,** the decision rests with Him alone, **and He will give you into our hands.** V. 48. **And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted and ran toward the army,** where it was drawn up in battle-line, **to meet the Philistine.** V. 49. **And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead that the stone sunk into his forehead,** breaking open the strong frontal bone; **and he fell upon his face to the earth,** stunned, if not killed, by the missile. V. 50. **So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David,** he had no regular weapons of war. V. 51. **Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine,** stepping on the trunk of the fallen giant, **and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith,** thus making sure of his death. **And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.** V. 52. **And the men of Israel and of Judah arose,** suddenly inspired with a mighty courage by the deed of David, **and shouted, and pursued the Philistines until thou come to the valley,** into the lowlands, **and to the gates of Ekron,** one of the chief Philistine cities. **And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim,** a city in the western lowlands of Judah, **even unto Gath and unto Ekron.** V. 53. **And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents,** taking all the booty in the form of food, clothing, and money out of their abandoned camp. V. 54. **And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem,** for the city itself was in the hands of the Israelites, only the fortress of Jebus on Mount Zion had not yet been conquered; **but he put his armor in his tent,** as his own part of the spoil. V. 55. **And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth?** He wanted to know about his parentage, where he hailed from. **And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.** V. 56. **And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.** So far as this strange question is concerned, there are two explanations. Either Saul was seeking information about the family of David, in order to carry out his promise of freeing the family from taxation, or Saul's memory had been affected by his affliction, especially since he rarely saw David except at the times when the madness was upon him. V. 57. **And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.** V. 58. **And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.** With this information Saul could now carry out his promise of which the soldiers had spoken. David's battle with Goliath is a picture of the battle which is the lot of all Christians in overcoming the attacks of Satan and of the sneering unbelievers. Although the odds often seem decidedly unfavorable to the Christians, they always have the Lord of hosts on their side and therefore must finally obtain the victory. At the same time we are here reminded of the great Son of David, who also, in a most singular manner, conquered the prince of this world and has given us the victory.

CHAPTER 18.

The Consequences of David's Victory.

Saul's Regard Changes to Hatred. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,** when David had given the king the information which he desired concerning his family, **that the soul of Jonathan,** the heroic son of Saul, **was knit with the soul of David,** chained to his in a firm and inseparable union, **bound by the band** of love; **and Jonathan loved him as his own soul,** with a total absence of selfishness, in an ideal friendship. V. 2. **And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house;** he was now permanently in the king's service, and could no more, as he formerly did, chap. 17, 15, return home from time to time to assist in the work and to perform his shepherd's duties. V. 3. **Then Jonathan and David made a covenant,** a formal sealing of their mutual love and friendship, **because he loved him as his own soul;** they promised each other perpetual friendship. V. 4. **And Jonathan,** as a testimony and token of his love and friendship, **stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle.** Thus the barrier of rank

and position was completely set aside; for Jonathan's object was not only to have David appear at court in proper dress, but also to honor David as a military hero, the conqueror of the terrible Philistine, who should therefore appear in a dress befitting his station. V. 5. **And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him,** on any campaign for which the king thought his military ability fitted him, **and behaved himself wisely,** being both prudent and prosperous; **and Saul set him over the men of war,** made him commander of a body of soldiers, **and he was accepted in the sight of all the people,** regarded very highly, **and also in the sight of Saul's servants,** the officials at Saul's court, who might have been jealous of his success. V. 6. **And it came to pass, as they came,** when the army returned from the pursuit of the Philistines to celebrate the victory, **when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel,** to celebrate the victory in the proper manner, **singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tabrets,** castanets, **with joy,** with joyful outcry, **and with instruments of music,** with triangles. V. 7. **And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.** They not only performed choral dances, but also alternate dances intended to interpret the battle and the victory, while, at the same time, they raised their voices in antiphonal singing, their song showing the high regard in which David was held on account of his heroic deed. V. 8. **And Saul was very wroth,** his jealousy immediately flared up, **and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?** All that was missing in David's case was the royal dignity and position, this being a presentiment which may almost have amounted to a suspicion, since Samuel had distinctly stated that the royal power would pass into another family. V. 9. **And Saul eyed David from that day and forward,** he looked upon him with envious suspicion. V. 10. **And it came to pass on the morrow that the evil spirit from God,** chap. 16, 13—16, **came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house,** he raged and raved in madness; **and David played with his hand,** performed on the harp, **as at other times; and there was a javelin,** a small spear used as a scepter, **in Saul's hand.** V. 11. **And Saul cast the javelin,** made a lunge at him; **for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it,** pass it through David into the wall. **And David avoided out of his presence twice,** he dodged the attack, but remained at his post in the attempt to soothe the king, to drive away his madness. V. 12. **And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him,** as all the evidence plainly showed, **and was departed from Saul;** the king felt more and more that he had been forsaken and rejected by the Lord in favor of David. V. 13. **Therefore Saul removed him from him,** from his position at court, where he was sheltered, **and made him his captain over a thousand,** probably promoted him to a higher position in the army; **and he went out and came in before the people,** in various military campaigns. V. 14. **And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways,** he used good judgment in all his undertakings and was correspondingly successful; **and the Lord was with him,** crowning his work with blessing. V. 15. **Wherefore, when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him,** every new incident showing the trend of affairs added new fuel to the fire of his jealousy and anger, as well as to his fear. V. 16. **But all Israel and Judah loved David because he went out and came in before them;** their regard for him increased as they noted that he went about his business quietly and effectively, and that all his military undertakings were successful. All believers are bound to expect hatred on the part of the godless world, especially since the infidels cannot help but note that God is on the side of His children. But in the measure that they show their hatred in works of enmity God holds His protecting hand over those that trust in Him.

Saul Plans to have David Removed. — V. 17. **And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife,** in fufilling the promise which was well known to all the soldiers of the army, chap. 17, 25; **only be thou valiant for me,** distinguished for courage, **and fight the Lord's battles.** This was not a condition, but an obligation laid upon David, Saul taking this opportunity to impress the younger man with his zeal for the people of God and with the necessity of thwarting the evil intenions of the heathen neighbors. "But behind this proper language of Canaan was hid Saul's cunning and wickedness towards David." (Lange.) **For Saul said,** namely, within himself, this was the thought which urged him on, **Let not mine hand be upon him,** it would have been a dangerous matter for him to take the life of David outright, **but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him;** Saul hoped that David would at some time fall in battle, and that the desired end would thus be obtained. V. 18. **And David said unto Saul,** in true modesty, without the least suspicion of Saul's guile, **Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel that I should be son-in-law to the king?** David implied that neither his own person nor his position in life, nor his family connections made him worthy of the honor offered him by the king. V. 19. **But it came to pass at the time when**

Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David that she was given unto Adriel, the Meholathite, to wife. It was simply a whim of Saul's which caused him to break his promise to David, for he grew more capricious as the years went by. V. 20. **And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David; and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him,** this turn of affairs promised to fit well with his plans. V. 21. **And Saul said, I will give him her that she may be a snare to him,** serve as a bait or lure to him, **and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him;** he had a scheme in mind which would surely be successful. **Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law in the one of the twain,** literally, "The second time thou shalt become my son-in-law," namely, first by the betrothal to Merab, the second time by the actual marriage to Michal. V. 22. **And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly,** as if they did it without the king's knowledge, **and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee; now, therefore, be the king's son-in-law.** The offer was pure hypocrisy, and all the more revolting since it was a part of the king's scheme to destroy David through Michal's love. V. 23. **And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David,** remembering his first experience with Saul, **said, Seemeth it to you a light thing,** a small matter, **to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?** His experience in the matter of Merab had impressed upon him once more the great distance between his station and the honored position for which he was supposed to strive, and being a poor man, it was hardly possible for him to pay the dowry or morning-gift expected of a suitor. V. 24. **And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David,** stating the objections advanced by David. V. 25. **And Saul said,** still with the same anxiety to attain his object, **Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines,** taken, of course, from their dead bodies, **to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines;** he was sure that this scheme to put David out of the way could not fail. V. 26. **And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law,** especially since he was to win Michal by a heroic achievement; **and the days were not expired,** that is, the period set by Saul for obtaining the morning-gift. V. 27. **Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men,** the thousand of whom he was commander, **and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king,** counted them out in full number, not only those required, but the hundred extra ones as a free gift, **that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal, his daughter, to wife.** His hostile schemes being thwarted once more, he was obliged to fulfil his promise. V. 28. **And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David,** it was so obvious that he could not close his eyes against the fact, **and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him;** even the fact of her love for David was a thorn in the king's side. V. 29. **And Saul was yet the more afraid of David,** for it was evident that God shielded the young man against his wicked designs; **and Saul became David's enemy continually,** all the days of his life. V. 30. **Then the princes of the Philistines went forth,** in campaigns to overthrow the power of Israel; **and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul,** he always exercised prudent judgment and thus had success in his undertakings, **so that his name was much set by,** he was highly thought of by all the people. All the upright in heart honor and love the faithful servants of God and acknowledge the blessings which the Lord gives to His people through them.

CHAPTER 19.

Saul's Persecution of David.

Jonathan Proves His Friendship for David. — V. 1. **And Saul spake to Jonathan, his son, and to all his servants that they should kill David;** he openly announced his intention of putting David out of the way, for he could no longer control his deadly hate. V. 2. **But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David,** his great love for his friend was unchanged; **and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee,** his loyalty for his friend urged him to warn David, even at the risk of offending his father. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself;** v. 3. **and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art,** probably a place where Saul often talked over private matters with his son, **and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee;** he would immediately make known to David just what he would find out from his father, and it was for this reason that he had David hide near by, lest his going to some distant place after the conversation

with his father awaken suspicion of an understanding with David. V. 4. **And Jonathan**, in the interview which he obtained, **spake good of David unto Saul, his father**, pointing out all his excellent qualities and his fine services to the entire nation, **and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant**, for David had always occupied this position with great cheerfulness, **against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good**; far from doing the king any harm, he had always and in all things done him great service by his feats of arms and by his attendance at court. V. 5. **For he did put his life in his hand**, risking his most precious possession, **and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel**, in delivering the people from the danger threatened by the Philistines; **thou sawest it and didst rejoice. Wherefore, then, wilt thou sin against innocent blood to slay David without a cause?** It was an urgent, yet modest appeal to whatever nobility was still left in Saul's character; a fine example to all men of how to speak the best of their neighbors. V. 6. **And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan**, he was persuaded by his son's noble intercession. **And Saul sware**, going to the other extreme, as usual, **As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain.** V. 7. **And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things**, giving him the joyful information that he was reinstated in Saul's favor. **And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence**, resumed his place at court, **as in times past.** True love and friendship to our neighbor demands of us that we defend him against all evil suspicions, put the best construction on everything, and calm down the anger of the jealous.

Michal Saves David's Life. — V. 8. **And there was war again**, for the Philistines would not remain quiet; **and David went out**, marched forth to battle, **and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter**, administered a decisive defeat; **and they fled from him.** V. 9. **And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul**, a judgment of the covenant God upon the reprobate king, **as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand; and David played with his hand**, for he had again taken his position as harpist. V. 10. **And Saul**, apparently in a fit of jealousy on account of the latest success of David, **sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin**, by driving the spear through his body; **but he slipped away out of Saul's presence**, dodging the threatened blow once more, **and he smote the javelin into the wall. And David fled, and escaped that night.** V. 11. **Saul also sent messengers unto David's house**, which he had reached before nightfall, **to watch him, and to slay him in the morning; and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.** The description given by David in Ps. 59, where he tells of this event, shows that there were jealous courtiers in attendance upon Saul, who were anxious to remove their powerful rival and therefore even added fuel to Saul's jealousy. V. 12. **So Michal let David down through a window. And he went, and fled, and escaped**, for Saul's watchmen were guarding only the door. V. 13. **And Michal took an image**, a picture of a household god, such as the Israelites still retained as the remnant of the idolatrous practises brought from their Chaldean home, Gen. 31, 19. 34, **and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster**, a braided or woven quilt, **and covered it with a cloth.** Thus the figure, covered with the upper garment which served as a covering at night, looked very much like that of a human being. V. 14. **And when Saul sent messengers to take David, in the morning, she said, He is sick**, for she probably thought, by telling this falsehood, to gain time for David, in order that he might have a longer start on his pursuers. V. 15. **And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed that I may slay him**; he was determined to carry out his purpose this time. V. 16. **And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.** So the deceit was discovered. V. 17. **And Saul**, angry because he had been duped, **said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so and sent away mine enemy**, the expression implying that the enemy of the father should be the enemy of the daughter as well, **that he is escaped? And Michal answered**, her fear of her father and her anxiety to save her own life causing her to tell another falsehood, **He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?** There is no wrong in throwing raging, ravening, murderous pursuers off the track, for such murderers are the instruments of Satan, who seeks to destroy the children of God in every possible manner.

Saul in Ramah. — V. 18. **So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah**, he turned to the prophet, his fatherly friend, first of all, **and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth**, the place where the children of the prophets lived, with Samuel at their head. V. 19. **And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah**, where there was a complex of buildings enclosed with a fence or wall. V. 20. **And Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying**, praising God in a

state of ecstasy, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, for he was the head of this prophets' seminary, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied, singing divine praises under the direction of an influence which they could not resist. V. 21. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. All this was to be a hint, on the part of Divine Providence, that God was hindering the messengers from carrying out Saul's command; it was He who was protecting David against wilful murder. V. 22. Then went he, Saul, also to Ramah, in a stubborn determination to carry out his will, and came to a great well that is in Sechu, a large cistern not far from Ramah; and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. V. 23. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God was upon him also, He took hold of him and held him in His power; and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. "The difference between Saul and his messengers was that the inspiration came on him as he was approaching the residence of the prophet, and that it attained a higher grade and lasted longer, completely suppressing his self-consciousness." V. 24. And he stripped off his clothes also, either by removing all his clothes or at least his outer garment, leaving only the inner shirt of linen or cotton, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down, literally, "fell," naked all that day and all that night. The length and the vehemence of the attack of ecstasy which Saul experienced was to indicate to him and others that his persecution of David was a battling against Jehovah and His Spirit, which should therefore not be persisted in, lest more serious effects follow. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets? The proverbial saying, which had first gone the rounds when Saul returned from Ramah after meeting Samuel, was now given new nourishment. Unfortunately the heart of Saul remained unchanged, just as the hearts and minds of unbelievers in our days are sometimes drawn into a wave of religious excitement, without a subsequent change of life. Nevertheless, God has even the hearts of His enemies in His power, and they sometimes confess the truth against their will, thus serving the interests of the Lord's kingdom.

CHAPTER 20.

The Proof of Jonathan's Friendship.

Conference between David and Jonathan. V. 1. And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, from the enclosure in which the seminary of the prophets was located, and came and said before Jonathan, with whom he was united in the closest and firmest friendship, chap. 18, 1—4, What have I done? What is mine iniquity, and what is my sin before thy father that he seeketh my life? The threefold question by which he appealed to the personal knowledge of Jonathan was a threefold denial of any fault on his part. V. 2. And he, Jonathan, said unto him, God forbid, that is, By no means; thou shalt not die, this is not only the assurance of a friend, but of a prince. Behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, absolutely nothing, but that he will show it me, he uncovered or revealed, talked over, all his plans with Jonathan as the heir apparent to the throne. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so; he was sure that Saul had not again determined upon the destruction of David at any cost. V. 3. And David, whose experience with Saul had taught him to estimate the true state of affairs more correctly, sware moreover, in addition to what he had said to Jonathan, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes, the kindly feeling of his son for David could not have escaped his observation; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this lest he be grieved; but truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, the double oath expressing the gravity of the situation as he saw it, there is but a step, hardly as much as a step, between me and death. "The picture is of a precipice, from which he is only a step removed, over which he may any moment be plunged." (Lange.) V. 4. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee, he would be glad to fulfil David's every wish, every thought. V. 5. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, a minor, but joyful festival of the Jewish church-year, connected with a cheerful meal, Num. 10, 10; 28, 11—15, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat, as custom required it; but let me go, Jonathan should consent to his remaining away deliberately, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even, for according to David's plan so much time was required to find out the disposition of the king. V. 6. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem, his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family, a celebration with a sacrificial meal, for such celebrations at that time, when the Tabernacle had been desecrated by the removal of the ark,

were held in various parts of the country. V. 7. **If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace,** it would be evident that Saul's hostile disposition showed itself only during his attacks of rage; **but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him,** that the destruction of David was a settled thing in Saul's mind. V. 8. **Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant,** show him merciful kindness; **for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee;** it was on the basis of this covenant of friendship that David appealed to Jonathan. **Notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself,** in case of a trespass on his part, he would rather die by the hand of his friend; **for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?** V. 9. **And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee,** there was no sin for which David was bound to atone by death; **for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?** It is a solemn protestation, with the force of an oath. V. 10. **Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me?** He wondered how he could get the information about Saul's decree concerning himself, for the matter was too delicate to be entrusted to a servant. **Or what if thy father answer thee roughly?** There was great danger that Saul would deal harshly with Jonathan in case he would make known his evil plans to David and this fact come to the knowledge of the king. V. 11. **And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field,** where they would be away from observation, not in danger of being overheard, and where Jonathan might point out to David a hiding-place which he had in mind for his own plan. **And they went out, both of them, into the field.** V. 12. **And Jonathan said unto David,** in a solemn invocation and vow before Jehovah, **O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded,** searched out, gotten the information from, **my father about to-morrow any time or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee,** v. 13. **the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan.** Jonathan most solemnly promised that he would immediately inform David in case Saul was favorably disposed toward him. **But if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace,** he would not even entrust the message to a servant, but would come in person to impress his warning upon his friend's mind and to make arrangements for his escape; **and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father,** a wish which indicates that Jonathan may have guessed the true situation of affairs. V. 14. **And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not,** in case he should enter upon his royal office before Jonathan's death; v. 15. **but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever,** kindness of the nature shown by Jehovah, the covenant God, to His people; **no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, every one, from the face of the earth.** Although Jonathan was a member of Saul's house, who was an enemy of David, he himself was united with David by the bonds of the truest friendship, and therefore wanted both himself and his children spared when David's time of revenge would come. V. 16. **So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies,** namely, by punishing all those who opposed him, for this Jonathan foresaw. V. 17. **And Jonathan caused David to swear again,** adjuring David to fulfil this last request, **because he loved him,** making his love toward David the ground of his request; **for he loved him as he loved his own soul,** chap. 18, 1. V. 18. **Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow is the new moon; and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat,** at the table of the king, **will be empty.** V. 19. **And when thou hast stayed three days,** on the third day, **then thou shalt go down quickly,** on account of the danger of being observed, **and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand,** when Jonathan, near that spot, had changed the murderous intention of Saul, chap. 19, 2, **and shalt remain by the stone Ezel,** evidently a well-known landmark. V. 20. **And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark,** three arrows being taken because some other archer might shoot just one or two by chance, but surely not three. V. 21. **And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go find out,** fetch, **the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou; for there is peace to thee, and no hurt, as the Lord liveth.** Just as the boy would come nearer to Jonathan, so David would be able to return without danger. V. 22. **But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee,** on the farther side, (then) **go thy way; for the Lord hath sent thee away,** bids him flee. The sign was simple and easily remembered. V. 23. **And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of,** everything pertaining to their covenant, **behold, the Lord be between thee and me forever,** for it was in His fear that they should feel bound to keep their promises of mutual faithfulness. True friendship and mercy requires us to take as eager and real an interest in the weal and woe of another as if it concerned ourselves, to stand by him in danger, and to show kindness even to the children of one who has bestowed kindness upon us.

Jonathan's Information to David.—V. 24. **So David hid himself in the field; and**

when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat, at the head of the table, the place of honor. V. 25. **And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall; and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.** It seems that Jonathan arose from his place next to Saul and gave his seat to Abner, his uncle, while he himself took the place ordinarily occupied by David, in order to avert suspicion. V. 26. **Nevertheless Saul spake not anything that day,** made no remark concerning the peculiar absence of David; **for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean,** that is, Levitically clean, a condition which kept a person away from sacrificial meals, Lev. 15, 16 ff.; Deut. 23, 11. V. 27. **And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty,** literally, "on the morrow after the new moon," the second day; **and Saul said unto Jonathan, his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?** V. 28. **And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem;** v. 29. **and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother,** the oldest brother, as the head of the family, **he hath commanded me to be there; and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me get away,** take myself off, **I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.** The report of Jonathan is entirely in keeping with the cordial relation existing between friends. V. 30. **Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman,** literally, "of perversity, of rebelliousness," a common expression for a man of obstinate and unruly disposition, **do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion,** disgrace, **and to the confusion of thy mother's nakedness,** to thy shame and to the shame of thy mother's nakedness, who would be ashamed of having given birth to such a rebellious son? V. 31. **For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground,** as long as David was alive and was, in the opinion of Saul, making rebellious attempts to possess the royal throne, **thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom;** David was standing in the way of making the kingdom hereditary in Saul's family. **Wherefore, now, send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die;** Saul considered him a son, a candidate, of death. V. 32. **And Jonathan,** by way of gentle remonstrance, in order to set forth David's innocence, **answered Saul, his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?** V. 33. **And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him,** he brandished and probably even hurled the small spear which he used as a scepter; **whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined,** firmly settled, **of his father to slay David.** V. 34. **So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger and did eat no meat,** did not partake of food, **the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David,** on account of the shame heaped upon his friend by Saul, which his generous nature deeply resented, while he overlooked the insult offered to himself, **because his father had done him shame.** V. 35. **And it came to pass in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.** He was careful to keep the agreement with David in every detail. V. 36. **And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot,** gathering them up from the ground as Jonathan practised with his bow. **And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him,** farther than the boy had passed on. V. 37. **And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot,** where it had flown, **Jonathan cried after the lad and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?** V. 38. **And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not,** lest in looking about in a leisurely fashion he might espy David behind the rock. **And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came to his master,** bringing the arrow, as he probably did in the next two cases. V. 39. **But the lad knew not anything; only Jonathan and David knew the matter.** V. 40. **And Jonathan gave his artillery,** bow, quiver, and arrows, **unto his lad and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city,** this giving him an opportunity to be alone with David. V. 41. **And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south,** for on that side of the rock he had concealed himself, **and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times,** both to do Jonathan honor and gratefully to acknowledge his efforts in his behalf; **and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded,** until David broke out in loud weeping. V. 42. **And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn, both of us, in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever.** This oath they wanted to keep with all firmness; nothing should ever persuade them to break it. **And he, David, arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.** Thus true love and friendship demonstrates its sincerity when one friend warns the other against harm and danger. And it is true in general that we should weep with those who mourn and comfort those who are in trouble, encouraging them with reference to Jehovah's mercy.

CHAPTER 21.

The First Movements of David on His Flight.

David at Nob. — V. 1. **Then came David to Nob**, a city of priests between Gibeah and Jerusalem, on a hill in whose neighborhood the Tabernacle seems to have been located for some years, at least temporarily,[4] **to Ahimelech, the priest**, either he or his father or his son also bearing the name Abiathar, Mark 2, 26; **and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David**, full of apprehension, since he may have known of Saul's hatred of David, **and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?** For David had left the few companions who had joined him in a safe place, since he wanted to talk to the high priest alone. V. 2. **And David said unto Ahimelech, the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee**, he was to reveal neither the reason for, nor the contents of, his commission; **and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.** The glib falsehood which David here told had evil results, and was not even justified by the fact that Ahimelech might have refused to assist him in case he had known that he was fleeing from the wrath of the king. V. 3. **Now, therefore, what is under thine hand?** David wanted anything in the line of food upon which the priest could quickly lay his hand. **Give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present**, whatever he could find in a hurry. V. 4. **And the priest answered David and said, There is no common bread under mine hand**, no kind of ordinary bread, such as was commonly used for food, **but there is hallowed bread**, for apparently the cakes of showbread had just been replaced by a fresh set, Lev. 24, 8, the ordinance requiring that the bread which had been removed be eaten by the priests in the Holy Place; **if the young men have kept themselves at least from women**, Lev. 15, 18. The high priest was willing to make an exception in this case, but felt that he must insist upon ceremonial, Levitical purity. V. 5. **And David answered the priest and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days**, the time since they had started on this expedition, **since I came out, and the vessels**, the gear and baggage of the soldiers, which might also become Levitically unclean, Lev. 11, 32. 33; 13, 47. 48, **of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel**, literally, "Though it is a profane way or procedure, yet it is sanctified to-day by the vessel," namely, by David himself as a chosen, anointed servant of the Lord; that fact set aside the ceremonial impurity of the act, particularly since it was a work of mercy which the high priest performed. V. 6. **So the priest gave him hallowed bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread, that was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away**; the cakes having been standing on the golden table for seven days, they had just been renewed or replaced by a new set, Lev. 24, 6—9. V. 7. **Now, a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord**, either as a proselyte, expecting to be received into the congregation of the Lord, or for the sake of some purification, or under suspicion as a leper; **and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.** This remark is here inserted on account of the subsequent history of Ahimelech. Note: Love is the fulfilment of the Law; love is the queen of all commandments, since all our works should be done in love. Even the outward ordinances of the Church are intended to serve the ends of love and peace. V. 8. **And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand, in his charge, spear or sword? For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste**, literally, "it was pressed," David had to be on his way without a moment's delay. V. 9. **And the priest said, The sword of Goliath, the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the Valley of Elah**, chap. 17, 2. 50, **behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod**, deposited for safe-keeping in the national Sanctuary, as a thanksgiving offering to the Lord and as a constant reminder of His merciful help in overcoming the enemies; **if thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.** It was valuable not only on account of its great size and good workmanship, but also on account of its associations. David may have felt that it was a holy weapon, promising him victory. He who goes forth to the battles of life with the blessing of God, with the weapons sanctified by His presence, may rest assured that no danger can really harm him.

David at Gath. — V. 10. **And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish**, whose official title was Abimelech, Ps. 34, **the king of Gath**, in the Philistine country. V. 11. **And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land**, for as such they designate him on account of his victorious campaigns, which entirely overshadowed those of Saul? **Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain**

4) Cp. *Syn.-Ber.*, Iowa-Distr., 1919, 30.

his thousands, and David his ten thousands? Cp. chap. 18, 7. V. 12. **And David**, who may have hoped to remain in the country of the Philistines unrecognized, **laid up these words in his heart**, he was worried about what they might lead to, **and was sore afraid of Achish, the king of Gath**, since the Philistines might, in a fit of revenge, fall on him and kill him. V. 13. **And he changed his behavior before them**, he perverted his understanding, **and feigned himself mad in their hands**, he played the madman as they tried to get hold of him, **and scrabbled on the doors of the gate**, pounded on them with his fists, **and let his spittle**, the foam at the mouth which he produced after the manner of madmen, **fall down upon his beard.** V. 14. **Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad**, he has gone insane; **wherefore, then, have ye brought him to me?** V. 15. **Have I need of madmen that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence?** The king evidently feared personal harm from David, who, as he thought, had gone insane. **Shall this fellow come into my house?** While David's plan to remain unrecognized among the Philistines did not succeed, the presence of mind which caused him to simulate an attack of insanity undoubtedly saved his life. Thus God is able to protect and to deliver His children in the midst of the enemies. Without His will not one hair of our heads falls to the ground.

CHAPTER 22.

Saul's Murder of the Priests.

David a Fugitive in Judah and Moab. — V. 1. **David, therefore,** because he could find no refuge in the land of the Philistines, **departed thence and escaped to the cave Adullam**, in the foothills of the Judean mountains, about sixteen miles southwest of Jerusalem; **and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him**, all his nearest relatives joined him, evidently because they feared the revenge of Saul upon their entire family; for it was nothing unusual for an Oriental prince to destroy a whole family for the fault of one person. V. 2. **And every one that was in distress**, feeling that the government of Saul was an arbitrary misrule, **and every one that was in debt**, oppressed by his creditors and having failed to receive from the government that protection against the violation of the law of loan and interest which he might expect, Ex. 22, 25; Lev. 25, 36; Deut. 23, 19, **and every one that was discontented**, bitter or embittered of soul, whose anxiety of soul over the condition of the kingdom, as it grew worse from day to day, drove them to a leader from whom they might, for the future, hope for better things, **gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them**, their leader; **and there were with him about four hundred men**, the number afterward rising to six hundred, chap. 23, 13. It was not a wild and lawless band, but a well-organized company, who were here trained in warfare, so that many of them afterwards became heroes in the nation. V. 3. **And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab**, southeast of the Dead Sea, the country of his great-grandmother; **and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.** He wanted his aged parents to have some protection, to live in some degree of security, until the present uncertain period of his own life would come to an end. V. 4. **And he brought them before the king of Moab**, to remain under the latter's protection; **and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold**, in his fortified position, in his mountain fastness near Mizpeh. V. 5. **And the Prophet Gad said unto David**, in a direct message which shows the loving care of God, **Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.** The Prophet Gad may have been one of the band which lived near Ramah, where David became acquainted with him, chap. 19, 18. **Then David departed**, out of the land of Moab, **and came into the forest of Hareth**, an unknown region, probably in the southwestern part of the territory of Judah. Like David, his great descendant, Jesus, accompanied by only a small band of faithful men, befriended by publicans and sinners, journeyed about in this country, in Palestine, entering into His glory through suffering and persecution.

Saul Takes Revenge upon the Priests of Nob. — V. 6. **When Saul heard that David was discovered**, when the place of his concealment was known at court, **and the men that were with him**, (now **Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah**, under the tamarisk on the height, where this session took place, **having his spear in his hand**, and all his servants were standing about him,) v. 7. **then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him**, it was a full assembly of all the members of the court, **Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds**, the intimation being that David had given them rich promises in order to bribe them, v. 8. **that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that showeth me that my son**, namely, Jonathan, **hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me**, show-

ing the sympathy which true loyalty demands, **or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant, David, against me, to lie in wait, as an enemy seeking the king's life, as at this day?** Both suspicions, that David was intriguing to take his throne and life, and that Jonathan was stirring up David to this conduct, were false. "Saul fancies himself in the meshes of a conspiracy against his person and kingdom organized by his own son, and accuses his courtiers of knowledge thereof and active participation therein. To such a pitch had the darkening and wasting of his inner life grown through hate and suspicion." (Lange.) V. 9. **Then answered Doeg, the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul,** chap. 21, 7, **and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub.** V. 10. **And he enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals,** food on the way, **and gave him the sword of Goliath, the Philistine.** Doeg was actuated by wickedness, falsehood, calumny, and deceit, as Ps. 52, 2—5 shows. V. 11. **Then the king sent to call Ahimelech, the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob,** for they all belonged to the one family of Aaron; **and they came all of them to the king.** V. 12. **And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub,** a formal and solemn address, to impress upon Ahimelech the greatness of his supposed transgression. **And he,** possessed, as he was, of a good conscience, **answered, Here I am, my lord.** V. 13. **And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?** The same false and unjust suspicions and accusations are here repeated by Saul, who assumed at once that Ahimelech was guilty of conspiracy and treason. V. 14. **Then Ahimelech answered the king and said, And who is so faithful,** in whom so much confidence has always been reposed, **among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding,** having access to the inner council of the king as one of his privy counselors, **and is honorable in thine house?** These three facts surely justified any person in considering David a true friend of the king. V. 15. **Did I then begin to enquire of God for him?** That day had not been the first time that he had obtained the divine answer for David, for that had often occurred before. **Be it far from me,** namely, any conspiracy or treason against the king; **let not the king impute anything unto his servant nor to all the house of my father,** they were not guilty of any wrong-doing; **for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more,** he was absolutely unaware of any conspiracy against the king and had not been guilty of any act of treason. V. 16. **And the king,** insane with suspicions which caused him to mistrust all men, **said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house.** V. 17. **And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him,** the runners, the members of the guard, who acted also as executioners, **Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David,** he considered them as taking the part of David against the rightful authority, **and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me,** made no immediate report of the matter. **But the servants of the king,** possessing more sanity and also more reverence for the servants of the Lord than Saul, **would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.** Their refusal makes the heinousness of Saul's sin all the more conspicuous. V. 18. **And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod,** a white capelike shoulder-dress patterned after the fine ephod of the high priest. It was a cold-blooded, bloodthirsty deed, a murderous slaughter. V. 19. **And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword,** in an insane fury of destruction, **both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword,** his action indicating that he considered the whole city under the ban of Jehovah for harboring David. V. 20. **And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David,** he came to David, the fugitive. V. 21. **And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests,** in a most cruel and bloody revenge. V. 22. **And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day,** he had felt it, he had had a premonition, **when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.** He was very strict in his self-judgment and self-condemnation on account of his heedlessness. V. 23. **Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life,** chiefly Saul and his henchmen, **seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.** While a fugitive from the insane wrath of Saul, David felt that he stood under the protection of Jehovah, and that Abiathar, therefore, sought by Saul in the same manner, could cheerfully and safely cast his lot with the king's son-in-law. Saul's horrible deed merely indicated that his obduracy had reached a point from which there would be no return. So the high priest of God and the Urim and Thummim were now with David. In like manner the small, persecuted band of Christians has the best protection and consolation, the Word and truth of God, in its midst.

CHAPTER 23.

David in the Wilderness.

David's Rescue of Keilah. — V. 1. **Then they told David,** he received information, **saying, Behold, the Philistines,** a strong band of their raiders, **fight against Keilah,** a city evidently in the lowland of Judah, near the Philistine frontier, **and they rob the threshing-floors,** where the grain was stacked ready for threshing. V. 2. **Therefore David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines?** He seems to have had reasons for considering himself the champion of the oppressed. **And the Lord said unto David,** through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, v. 6, **Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.** The command, "Rescue Keilah," included the promise that success would crown his efforts. V. 3. **And David's men,** who at that time did not share his simple trust in Jehovah, **said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah,** they were apprehensive of the persecution of Saul; **how much more, then, if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines,** where they would have enemies before and behind? V. 4. **Then David enquired of the Lord yet again,** in the same manner. **And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.** This definite promise was intended to allay the fears of David's men. V. 5. **So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter.** The Philistines, instead of gaining booty, were themselves spoiled, losing their flocks and herds and suffering a very severe defeat. **So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.** V. 6. **And it came to pass,** as is here noted in explanation, **when Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, fled to David to Keilah,** joining him just when the campaign to rescue the city was planned, **that he came down with an ephod,** the shoulder-dress of the high priest with the Urim and Thummim, **in his hand.** This was in David's favor, for he could now at any time ask the will of the Lord. V. 7. **And it was told Saul,** who had his spies watching all the movements of David, **that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand,** for he tried to deceive himself into believing that David, and not himself, had been rejected by God; **for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.** Saul thought that David had prepared a trap for himself by making a fortified city his headquarters, since escape would there be more difficult, once the city was surrounded. V. 8. **And Saul called all the people together to war,** formally summoned all the soldiers of his army, **to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men,** and thus to get him into his power. V. 9. **And David,** who also had his spies in the field, **knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him,** he found out about this plan to destroy him; **and he said to Abiathar, the priest, Bring hither the ephod,** for the purpose of getting information from the Lord. V. 10. **Then said David,** in a prayer showing his trust in Jehovah, **O Lord God of Israel, Thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.** V. 11. **Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech Thee, tell Thy servant.** The questions are not given in the wrong order, due to David's excitement, as has been said, but David feared that the men of Keilah would deliver him into Saul's hands as soon as they found out that the king had planned to come. **And the Lord said,** answering the last question first, **He will come down.** V. 12. **Then said David,** repeating his first question, **Will the men, the citizens, of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up.** Instead of taking the part of the man who had rescued them from their enemies, the men of Keilah would have been guided by policy. V. 13. **Then David and his men, which were about six hundred,** since new men were being added to his band constantly, **arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go,** without a definite plan, as chance and circumstance led them. **And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth,** he abandoned his campaign. In this story also David is a type of the Son of God. For He also, while engaged in rescuing His people from the hand of their most terrible enemies, was betrayed into the hands of the unjust. Moreover, such is the lot of all those who openly take the part of the Lord.

In the Wilderness of Ziph. — V. 14. **And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds,** on sheltering heights in the great semi-arid region of Southern Judah, whose several parts were named after the cities in the neighborhood, **and remained in a mountain in the Wilderness of Ziph,** establishing his camp there for some time. **And Saul sought him every day,** all the days of his life, continually, **but God delivered him not into his hand.** This remark serves as an introduction to the entire next section. V. 15. **And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life,** he received information to that effect, it was impressed upon his consciousness more and more; **and David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a wood,** a thick forest, which offered him the best form of concealment. V. 16. **And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and**

went to David into the wood, in proof of the continued faithfulness of his friendship, and strengthened his hand in God, encouraged him by reminding him of God's promises of His divine presence and protection. V. 17. And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find thee, he was convinced that David was sheltered by God's special protection; and thou shalt be king over Israel, a conviction which had been forced upon him by the trend of events, and I shall be next unto thee, he was perfectly willing to resign all claim to the throne; and that also Saul, my father, knoweth, he was aware that David was to be his successor. V. 18. And they two made a covenant before the Lord, renewing the covenant which united their hearts, chap. 20, 16. 17. 42; and David abode in the wood, remaining in concealment with his men, and Jonathan went to his house. V. 19. Then came up the Ziphites, whose behavior furnishes a most glaring contrast to that of Jonathan, to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us, in our neighborhood, in strongholds in the wood, where they could note his every movement, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south side of Jeshimon? This wooded, rocky mountain lay on the south side of a waste region which stretched out on the west side of the Dead Sea, within the steppes of Judah. V. 20. Now, therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand. So passionate were they in their adherence to Saul that they would do all in their power to deliver David into his hand. V. 21. And Saul said, with the blindness of an evil conscience, Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me, praising them in this respect, just as he had rebuked his servants for their lack of sympathy for him, chap. 22, 8. V. 22. Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, where his foot will be, every retreat of David in his constant shifting about; for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly, that was a prominent trait in David's character. V. 23. See, therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking-places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, literally, "what is certain," that is, with sure information, and I will go with you; and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah, the larger division of the tribe, Num. 1, 16, that is, in their territory. Thus Saul still showed his fixed idea that David was attempting to take his throne and life, and thus committing a great crime against God. V. 24. And they arose and went to Ziph before Saul, who was soon to follow with his men; but David and his men were in the Wilderness of Maon, south of the mountain of Hachilah, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon, on or near a conical hill which still bears a very similar name. V. 25. Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David; wherefore he came down into a rock, descended the rock, the mountain where he had been, in order to reach the lowland and a new hiding-place, and abode in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the Wilderness of Maon. V. 26. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain, the mountain thus separating the two armies; and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul, he was very anxious to escape; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them, they were at the point of surrounding them. V. 27. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land, they had undertaken a raid on a large scale, their object being to obtain booty. V. 28. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines; therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth (rock of divisions, rock of escapes), because it was undoubtedly due to its upthrust that David escaped with his men. V. 29. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds at En-gedi, about the middle of the western shore of the Dead Sea. The Lord, who governs all things, protected His servant in this extremity. And the same God has ways and means to help us in all our troubles and difficulties, if we but commit our way to Him.

CHAPTER 24.

David Spares Saul in the Cave.

Saul in the Cave. — V. 1. And it came to pass, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, just as soon as he had repulsed the invaders, made them desist from their raid, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the Wilderness of En-gedi, where the many caves in the limestone hills offered excellent places for concealment. V. 2. Then Saul, still filled with the same bloodthirstiness which had brought him to the Wilderness of Maon, took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats, for, due to the wildness and steepness of the hills in this neighborhood, it was a favorite haunt of ibexes, or wild goats. V. 3. And he came to

the sheepcotes by the way, a locality with large caves which had been fitted up to house sheep, **where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet,** to do his easement; **and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave,** they were in the rear of the cave or in some of its side passages. V. 4. **And the men of David said unto him,** for they could plainly see Saul, as they looked toward the light, while Saul's eyes could not penetrate the darkness in the rear, **Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.** Their reference seems to be only to what they considered a divine ordering of this favorable opportunity to take revenge upon Saul. **Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily,** a corner of his upper garment, which Saul had evidently laid aside. V. 5. **And it came to pass afterward that David's heart smote him,** his conscience bothered him, **because he had cut off Saul's skirt,** for since he regarded the person of Saul as sacred, he feared that Saul might consider his act a violation of his royal majesty. V. 6. **And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.** Saul still held the office and had the dignity of a king in Israel, and for that reason his person, in the eyes of David, was inviolable. V. 7. **So David stayed his servants with these words,** literally, "rent to pieces, cut down," said of a solemn rebuke, **and suffered them not to rise against Saul,** for the purpose of taking bloody revenge upon the oppressor. **But Saul rose up out of the cave and went on his way.** David's act was one of true magnanimity. Christians should always remember to leave vengeance to God, for He will requite in an adequate and just manner.

David Protests His Innocence. — V. 8. **David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave,** boldly taking this opportunity to defend himself against the slanders which filled Saul's heart with mistrust against him, Ps. 7, **and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king!** In these words he confesses himself bound to Saul as his subject and acknowledges him as the anointed of the Lord, who occupied his office by divine right. **And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself,** his behavior thus corresponding to his address of Saul. V. 9. **And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words,** such as those of the men of Ziph and of Cush, the Benjamite, **saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?** David thus represented the entire situation as due to intriguing tongues. V. 10. **Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how the Lord had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave,** for so the incident clearly appeared; **and some bade me kill thee,** the temptation to kill Saul had been presented to David; **but mine eye spared thee, and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed.** This fact David urged in his favor, first of all. V. 11. **Moreover, my father,** as David calls Saul in pious reverence, **see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand,** a bit of evidence which demonstrated how absolutely Saul had been in his power; **for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe and killed thee not know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression,** deliberate crime and wickedness, **in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee,** he could rightly protest his innocence; **yet thou huntest my soul to take it,** pursuing him like a dangerous animal through forests and over mountains. V. 12. **The Lord judge between me and thee,** for to His decision David left the entire matter, **and the Lord avenge me of thee,** for this unwarranted persecution of David would not go unpunished, as he firmly believed; **but mine hand shall not be upon thee,** he would not seek or take his own revenge. V. 13. **As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand shall not be upon thee.** A wicked and godless person might have embraced the opportunity to take revenge, but David had purposely refrained from doing so. And David finally urged that Saul's conduct was foolish and inconsistent with royal dignity. V. 14. **After whom is the king of Israel come out? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog,** who could no longer bite and bother people, **after a flea,** at best poor game for a royal hunter. David stressed his insignificance and harmlessness, for he neither had the desire nor was he in a position to work the king harm. V. 15. **The Lord, therefore,** because David was innocent and because Saul's persecution was foolish, **be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand,** to be freed from the persecution of Saul by the justice of God. David here is an example to all children of God, showing what love of the enemy means. Like him, Christians should spare their enemies and reward them good for evil.

Saul Acknowledges His Fault. — V. 16. **And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David?** Saul was deeply affected by the fervor of David, by the justice of his plea, by the pious reverence shown by him. **And Saul lifted up his voice and wept,** momentarily overcome by emotion.

V. 17. **And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.** The evidence before his eyes forced Saul to make at least this acknowledgment. V. 18. **And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me, forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not,** David had not taken the opportunity offered by God's providence. V. 19. **For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?** It was a most unusual way of dealing with an enemy, to let him go scot-free when such a fine chance to dispose of him offered. **Wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.** For the time being, Saul permitted the nobler sentiments to come into his heart, but there was no true conversion. V. 20. **And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.** This conclusion was forced upon Saul by the evident protection of the Lord which David enjoyed, and he still remembered what Samuel had told him regarding his own rejection. V. 21. **Swear now, therefore, unto me by the Lord that thou wilt not cut off my seed, his children, after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.** It was not unusual in the Orient for the king of a new dynasty to exterminate the entire family of the former king, down to the most remote relatives, and this Saul wanted to avoid. V. 22. **And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home,** returned to his royal residence; **but David and his men gat them up unto the hold,** for they knew better than to expect Saul to retain the kind disposition and bearing which he had last shown. Saul's emotion was no true repentance, his heart had not been changed. Such a person is and remains a child of wrath, whether he rages and raves against the Lord or whether he is more quiet.

CHAPTER 25.

David, Nabal, and Abigail.

Nabal's Foolishness. — V. 1. **And Samuel died,** his death taking place at about this critical time in the history of Israel; **and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah,** the entire nation thus honoring him as a great prophet, whose rule had been a blessing for Israel. **And David arose, and went down to the Wilderness of Paran,** the northern end of the Arabian desert. V. 2. **And there was a man in Maon,** chap. 23, 24, a city southeast of Hebron, **whose possessions were in Carmel,** he had his herds and flocks on the mountain-meadows near the city, in the elevated plain of Judah; **and the man was very great,** rich and influential, **and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats; and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel,** usually an occasion of great festivities. V. 3. **Now, the name of the man was Nabal and the name of his wife Abigail; and she was a woman of good understanding,** sensible, well versed in genteel conduct, **and of a beautiful countenance,** well formed; **but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb,** to whom this entire region near Hebron had been given, Judg. 1, 10—15. V. 4. **And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep,** and therefore would probably have an abundance of food on hand for the joyful meal. V. 5. **And David sent out ten young men,** as on an important and solemn embassy, **and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name,** with the customary greeting of peace; v. 6. **and thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity,** rather, May good fortune attend thee for a long and happy life! **Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.** This comprehensive greeting was intended to render Nabal well-disposed toward the messengers. V. 7. **And now, I have heard that thou hast shearers,** with all that this implied; **now, thy shepherds which were with us,** with whom David's men lived on terms of good fellowship, protecting them against wild animals and against robbers, **we hurt them not,** by any form of injury, **neither was there aught missing unto them all the while they were in Carmel.** Even during his exile David proved himself the champion of the people. V. 8. **Ask thy young men,** his sheep-herders, **and they will show thee,** testifying to the splendid fellowship which existed between David's men and them. **Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes; for we come in a good day,** for such a festivity should be an auspicious occasion; **give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand,** as much as he could afford at this time, **unto thy servants and to thy son David.** V. 9. **And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words,** making their request in his very words, **in the name of David, and ceased,** they sat down, awaiting the fulfilment of their request. V. 10. **And Nabal answered David's servants and said, Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?** What was David and his concerns to

him? Why should he bother about his troubles? **There be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master;** these words insulted David as a common runaway and renegade, who had maliciously severed his relation with Saul. V. 11. **Shall I, then, take my bread and my water and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?** Both the necessities of life and the luxuries he denied them; the very idea of sharing these with David and his men he represented as preposterous. V. 12. **So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings,** gave him the report of this contemptuous and insulting rebuff. V. 13. **And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword,** to take revenge for this insult. **And they girded on every man his sword, and David also girded on his sword; and there went up after David about four hundred men, and two hundred abode by the stuff,** guarding the camp. Nabal is a type of a covetous fool, whose heart has been hardened against every form of distress and want, who is willing enough to accept services at the hand of others, but wants to know nothing of services on his part.

Abigail's Tact and Prudence. — V. 14. **But one of the young men,** of the servants of Nabal, **told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them,** drove over them, flew on them in a rage. V. 15. **But the men,** namely, those of David, **were very good unto us, and we were not hurt,** injured, made subjects of shame and contempt, **neither missed we anything as long as we were conversant with them,** during all the time of their fellowship with them, **when we were in the fields;** v. 16. **they were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep,** their presence had proved a powerful protection against the wild beasts as well as against the robbers of the desert. V. 17. **Now, therefore, know and consider what thou wilt do,** Abigail was to find some way to avert a probable calamity; **for evil is determined against our master and against all his household, this they might count on as firmly settled; for he,** Nabal, **is such a son of Belial,** bad, foolish, and profitless, **that a man cannot speak to him.** That was the estimate in which Nabal was held by his household and by his servants. V. 18. **Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine,** the skins used for this purpose in the Orient, **and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn,** more than forty quarts of roasted grain, **and an hundred clusters of raisins,** in the form of cakes made of pressed raisins, **and two hundred cakes of figs,** also in the pressed form, **and laid them on asses.** V. 19. **And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you.** Like Jacob, Gen. 32, 13—20, she sent the presents of reconciliation ahead of her. **But she told not her husband Nabal,** who would probably have interfered very decidedly. V. 20. **And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill,** probably a depression or pass between two peaks, hidden from sight at any distance, **and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.** V. 21. **Now, David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness,** in protecting his wealth in flocks, **so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him; and he hath requited me evil for good.** David had been bitterly disappointed in his expectation of receiving any recognition whatever on the part of Nabal and had now flared up in passionate anger, which was not right. V. 22. **So and more also do God unto the enemies of David if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall,** so much as a single person. David wrongly considered the act of Nabal a manifestation of enmity against the cause of Jehovah. V. 23. **And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face,** in an attitude of supplication and subjection, **and bowed herself to the ground,** v. 24. **and fell at his feet,** humbling herself more and more before him, **and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me, let this iniquity be,** the blame or guilt for this unfortunate affair; **and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.** He was to consider her alone as the foolish and guilty person with whom he was to deal. V. 25. **Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal,** he should not take his behavior to heart; **for as his name is, so is he; Nabal** (fool) **is his name, and folly is with him; but I, thine handmaid, saw not the young men of my lord whom thou didst send.** Having drawn attention to her own person, she proceeds with her arguments. V. 26. **Now, therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood,** literally, "into blood-guiltiness," **and from avenging thyself with thine own hand,** by saving or procuring help for himself, thus making himself guilty of a serious crime, **now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal,** sons of folly, the correlate of godlessness, which invariably brings the punishment of God upon the sinner. To these two points Abigail now adds the third argument, in offering her gift. V. 27. **And now this blessing,**

the present which she had sent before her, **which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord,** these words showing that she was a skilful diplomat. It is only now that she asks for pardon and forbearance. V. 28. **I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid,** the guilt which she had taken upon herself by her own confession; **for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house,** as a reward of his magnanimity in this case, **because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days,** that is, bad luck, misfortune. V. 29. **Yet a man is risen to pursue thee and to seek thy soul,** or, "Should a man arise and pursue," for she delicately omits a direct reference to Saul; **but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord, thy God,** said of the sure protection which the children of God enjoy in the merciful fellowship of the Lord here on earth; **and the souls of thine enemies, them shall He sling out, as out of the middle of a sling,** the pan of the sling where the missile is placed before it is shot. It is a strong expression for the total rejection which should strike the enemies of David by the divine punishment. V. 30. **And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee,** for she knew that God had chosen and called David to be king of Israel, **and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel,** v. 31. **that this shall be no grief unto thee nor offense of heart unto my lord,** a stumbling-block or vexation, **either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself,** bloodshed and self-help being the double sin that he would have been guilty of; **but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid,** not to forget her entirely in his own prosperity. V. 32. **And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me,** for David ever acknowledged himself to be under divine guidance; v. 33. **and blessed be thy advice,** her tactful wisdom, **and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand,** thus accepting the correction in the two points which she made. V. 34. **For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light,** by tomorrow morning, **any that pisseth against the wall.** V. 35. **So David received of her hand that which she had brought him,** the presents in food, **and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house, without anxiety; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person,** her petition had been favorably regarded by him. Like David, all believers will find many an occasion for thanking the Lord for mercifully keeping them from some severe transgression, often in the very nick of time.

David Marries Abigail. — V. 36. **And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold,** although he had been too stingy to share with David and his men, **he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king,** with all its luxury and sumptuousness; **and Nabal's heart was merry within him,** on account of the rich feast, **for he was very drunken,** intoxicated to such a point that he was not aware of anything outside of his own pleasure; **wherefore she told him nothing, less or more,** not a word, **until the morning light.** V. 37. **But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal,** when he had become sober once more, **and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone,** struck with apoplexy, probably due to violent anger because his wife had presumed to deal with the hated David without consulting his authority. V. 38. **And it came to pass about ten days after that the Lord smote Nabal that he died,** his death being a punishment for his ungodliness. V. 39. **And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept His servant from evil;** it was clearly God's judgment upon the insult offered him by Nabal and ever so much better than the revenge which he himself would have taken; **for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head.** To David it was like a case in law, in which the Lord had rendered the judicial decision. **And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.** V. 40. **And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee to take thee to him to wife.** It was the usual formal proposal. V. 41. **And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth,** in the Oriental manner of deepest devotion, **and said,** with the same extreme formal humility, **Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord,** thus declaring herself willing, in consenting to the proposal, to perform the lowest service of the house-slaves. V. 42. **And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her,** her usual train of servants; **and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.** The author now immediately supplies further information

concerning David's other domestic relations. V. 43. **David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel,** a city in the mountains of Judah; **and they were also both of them his wives,** in addition to Michal, chap. 18, 28. V. 44. **But Saul had given Michal, his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti, the son of Laish, which was of Gallim,** a town between Gibeah and Jerusalem. Cp. 2 Sam. 3, 14 ff. Note: What the believers do good to either friends or enemies is rewarded by God, both in time and in eternity.

CHAPTER 26.

David Again Spares Saul.

David in Saul's Camp. — V. 1. **And the Ziphites,** who had once before played traitors against David, **came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon,** south of the wilderness? V. 2. **Then Saul arose, and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph,** having forgotten, apparently, that he owed his life to the magnanimity of David, chap. 24, 18, **having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him,** evidently his permanent guard and the nucleus of his standing army, chap. 13, 2, **to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph.** V. 3. **And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah,** for the entire neighborhood bore this name, the mountain with its foothills and lower slopes, **which is before Jeshimon, by the way,** on the well-known highroad which passed along near the mountain. **But David abode in the wilderness,** having withdrawn from the mountain Hachilah, **and,** or for, **he saw,** he found out through his scouts, **that Saul came after him into the wilderness.** V. 4. **David, therefore, sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed,** he received definite information to that effect, the matter was beyond a doubt. V. 5. **And David arose and came to the place where Saul had pitched,** he himself made a scouting trip by night, accompanied by at least a few of his faithful men; **and David,** having reached a spot where he could overlook the entire camp of Saul, **beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner, the son of Ner, the captain of his host; and Saul lay in the trench,** inside the wagon fortification, or rampart, **and the people pitched round about him.** V. 6. **Then answered David and said to Ahimelech, the Hittite,** for parts of this heathen nation had remained and were gradually merged with the Israelites, **and to Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab,** the son of David's sister and afterwards one of David's captains, 1 Chron. 2, 16; 2 Sam. 18, 2; 20, 6; 23, 19, **saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?** It was a very dangerous trip for the purpose of reconnoitering the king's camp. **And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.** V. 7. **So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench,** probably considering the bulwark of the wagons a sufficient safeguard, **and his spear,** the sign of royal authority, **stuck in the ground at his bolster,** near his head, to be ready for any emergency; **but Abner and the people lay round about him,** all soundly asleep. V. 8. **Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day;** for so, according to the usage of war, he regarded Saul; **now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.** This grim remark, that there would be no need of a second blow, shows how David's men felt about Saul's searching expedition. V. 9. **And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?** David had not changed his position toward Saul's person, as being sacred and inviolable by virtue of his kingship, chap. 24, 6. V. 10. **And David said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him,** or, unless the Lord smite him, for David's oath put the revenge entirely in God's hand, **or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish,** these three being the contingencies which David took into account: sudden death by a stroke, a normal death, and death in battle. V. 11. **The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed;** he would not, on the part of the Lord, on the Lord's account, take vengeance into his own hand; **but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster,** at his head, **and the cruse of water,** the water-pitcher, **and let us go.** V. 12. **So David,** Abishai acting for him, **took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away; and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them,** Jehovah thus expressing His approval of David's expedition. That is the disposition of the children of God, not to seek their own revenge, but to place their matter into the hands of the Lord, for He has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay."

Saul Overcome by David's Plea. — V. 13. **Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off;** having crossed the valley, he climbed back to the very top of the hill from which he had

probably come down in the evening; **a great space being between them,** for David trusted Saul so little that he preferred to have a great distance between himself and the king. V. 14. **And David cried to the people and to Abner, the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner?** This is much like our expression, Heigh-ho! or, Halloo! **Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?** Abner resented this calling toward the king, by which his rest was disturbed. V. 15. **And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man,** a warrior entrusted with the protection and security of the king? **And who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore, then, hast thou not kept the lord, thy king?** It was the general's special duty to watch over the king's life. **For there came one of the people in to destroy the king, thy lord;** Saul had been in real peril of life. V. 16. **This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die,** literally, "Sons of death are ye," **because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed;** they deserved death for their neglect of duty. **And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.** V. 17. **And Saul knew David's voice and said, Is this thy voice, my son David?** Since David was so far away and it was not yet light, Saul could recognize him only by his voice. **And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king!** V. 18. **And he said,** once more urging his innocence, which stood out all the more strongly in view of the fact that he had spared Saul's life once more, **Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in mine hand?** His manner of addressing Saul is as humble, as gentle, and as reverent as ever. V. 19. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let Him accept an offering,** literally, "If Jehovah incited thee against me, let Him smell a peace-offering," the idea being that Saul should reconcile God to himself by an offering which had the purpose of restoring the right relationship between Jehovah and His children; **but if they,** the ones that incited the king, **be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.** Their enmity had the object of making David flee out of the country where the Lord lived among His people in His Sanctuary and thus tempting him to commit idolatry, because he could not worship Jehovah at the altars erected to His honor. V. 20. **Now, therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord,** Saul was not to continue his enmity to the point where he would force David to die in a strange land; **for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea,** for by this name David emphasizes his own insignificance in the country, cp. chap. 24, 14, **as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains,** for a single straying partridge in the mountains is not worth hunting, since the birds may easily be found in flocks in the fields. V. 21. **Then said Saul,** with the same momentary emotion which he had shown before, chap. 24, 16, **I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.** Instead of turning to the Lord in true repentance and asking Him for grace and power to overcome the evil of his heart, he makes a promise which was no more sincere than that of the same kind made on the previous occasion. V. 22. **And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! And let one of the young men come over and fetch it.** V. 23. **The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness,** this being said with special references to himself; **for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.** He had stood the test when he spared the life of Saul, and exhibited his righteousness and faithfulness. V. 24. **And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes,** literally, "made large," esteemed highly, **so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord,** into whose hands David confidently committed himself, **and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation,** all the misery and distress which the hostility of Saul would still prepare for him. V. 25. **Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David,** still speaking under the influence of the fleeting better feeling which David's noble conduct awakened in him; **thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail,** both undertake and also fully perform, for Saul could not shut his eyes to the fact that the blessing of Jehovah was resting upon David. **So David went on his way,** not accepting Saul's invitation to return with him, **and Saul returned to his place.** Thus these two men parted forever, for Saul's enmity continued and forced David to flee into heathen territory. When a person has so hardened his heart that all kindness leaves no lasting impression, his final condemnation is only a matter of time.

CHAPTER 27.

David in the Land of the Philistines.

David in Gath and Ziklag. — V. 1. **And David said in his heart,** taking counsel with himself, expressing the inmost conviction of his heart, **I shall now perish,** be cut down, snatched away, swept off, **one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me,** literally, "There is nothing good for me," there was no advantage, no sense in his staying in the territory of Israel, **than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines,** that was his one place of refuge; **and Saul shall despair of me to seek me any more in any coast of Israel,** desist from the pursuit as a hopeless undertaking; **so shall I escape out of his hand.** V. 2. **And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him,** whose number had remained unchanged in recent years, **unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath,** evidently the same man with whom he sought refuge a number of years before, chap. 21, 10, who by this time, however, must have been convinced that David was no longer an ally of Saul. V. 3. **And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household,** with his family, **even David with his two wives, Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife,** chap. 25, 42. 43. V. 4. **And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath,** where the latter had some leisure to devote to music and poetry, Ps. 8; **and he sought no more again for him,** David thus gaining his object. V. 5. **And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country,** one of the suburbs or country-cities, **that I may dwell there; for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?** David's plea and suggestion was that his men were overcrowding the city and that their expenses were very large, but his real motive undoubtedly was to get away from the idolatrous customs of the Philistines, which surely must have brought him, as the guest of the king, into unpleasant situations at times. V. 6. **Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day,** a city which had been apportioned to the tribe of Simeon, Josh. 19, 5, but had evidently been taken by the Philistines only recently and was still deserted; **wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day,** having been given to David as an outright present. V. 7. **And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.** It was undoubtedly weakness of faith which caused David to leave the territory of Judah, for he had expressly been told by the Prophet Gad to remain there. It happens time and again that even staunch servants of the Lord become weak under continued suffering, forgetting entirely that God's merciful power is able to keep them in all dangers. But the Lord has compassion with the weakness of His children.

David's Campaign against the Heathen. V. 8. **And David and his men,** no longer under the direct observation of the Philistines, **went up and invaded the Geshurites and the Gezrites,** small nations living south of the Philistine territory, **and the Amalekites,** the nomadic tribes whom Saul had almost destroyed, chap. 15, 7; **for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt,** on the Egyptian border. V. 9. **And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive,** since they would naturally inform against him, **and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish,** bringing this rich booty along. V. 10. **And Achish said,** it was his custom to ask, **Whither have ye made a road to-day?** referring to their latest raid. **And David said, Against the south of Judah and against the south of the Jerahmeelites and against the south of the Kenites,** his geographical references being purposely vague and indefinite, in order to make Achish think that his expeditions were directed against some tribe of Israel or against their allies on the southern border. V. 11. **And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us,** David and his men, **saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines,** that is, such was David's custom while nominally under the jurisdiction of the Philistine king. V. 12. **And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him,** making himself a stench, a loathing, completely alienating himself from the Israelites; **therefore he shall be my servant forever.** Thus Achish was deceived, while David continued to harass and destroy the desert tribes which were a menace to Israel. Thus he, while receiving evil at the hand of Saul, rewarded good to the entire people of Israel, a fine example of love toward one's enemies.

CHAPTER 28.

Saul at Endor.

The Consultation with the Witch. — V. 1. **And it came to pass in those days,** while David was still living in their country, **that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare to fight with Israel.** It was a mustering of all the soldiers of the Philistine city-states that were fit for military duty; for the purpose was not a mere raid, but a campaign of conquest. **And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly,** since the circumstances were such as David saw before his eyes, **that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men,** as a part of the Philistine army. This was the predicament, the danger, into which David had brought himself by his flight into the land of the Philistines. V. 2. **And David said to Achish, Surely,** since circumstances were of such a nature, **thou shalt know what thy servant can do.** David's answer was purposely evasive and ambiguous, but Achish took it to promise the action which he required, whereas David's answer really said, Conditions will determine what thy servant will do. **And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head forever,** captain of his body-guard. V. 3. **Now, Samuel was dead,** chap. 25, 1, **and all Israel had lamented him,** observing the customary mourning, **and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city,** in the garden or court of his house. **And Saul,** in accordance with the very strict provisions of the Law, Ex. 22, 18; Lev. 19, 31; 20, 27; Deut. 18, 10. 11, **had put away those that had familiar spirits,** the conjurers of the dead, **and the wizards,** the necromancers or speaking soothsayers, **out of the land,** in order to show himself jealous for God's honor and thus to win Jehovah's favor. V. 4. **And the Philistines gathered themselves together,** they mustered their armies, **and came and pitched in Shunem,** on the western border of the Plain of Jezreel; **and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa,** the mountain range in the territory of Issachar, in the southeastern part of the same plain, only a few miles from the Philistine camp. V. 5. **And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines,** for their camp was plainly visible from his own, **he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled,** due probably to a strong feeling which suddenly came upon him that he was forsaken of God. V. 6. **And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim,** that is, the Urim and Thummim of the high priest's ephod, for Saul had either had a new ephod made after the escape of Abiathar, chap. 23, 6, or there were, for a while, two high priests, cp. 2 Sam. 8, 17; 15, 24. 29. 35; 1 Chron. 15, 11, **nor by prophets,** to whom Saul now once more turned. It was no true inquiry, made with a humble heart, and therefore was ignored by the Lord. V. 7. **Then said Saul unto his servants,** his hardened heart prompting him to turn to superstitious means forbidden by the Law, **Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit,** one in possession of an Ob, or spirit, one able to conjure up the dead, **that I may go to her and enquire of her,** to have the future disclosed to him. **And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor,** a town about twelve miles north of Gilboa, on the northern slopes of the Little Hermon, almost ten miles southeast of Nazareth. V. 8. **And Saul disguised himself,** by taking off all the garments and insignia indicating his rank, **and put on other raiment; and he went, and two men with him,** as his guides and his body-guard. **And they came to the woman by night,** partly to escape the notice of the Israelites themselves, partly that of the Philistine outposts. **And he said,** when they had reached the woman's house, **I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit,** she was to uncover the future for him by making use of necromancy, **and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee.** V. 9. **And the woman said unto him,** since she suspected that this was a test, a trap to catch her and convict her, **Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits,** the order for their extirpation having been carried out with great rigor, **and the wizards, out of the land; wherefore, then, layest thou a snare for my life to cause me to die?** Cp. Lev. 20, 27. Evidently this was the manner in which necromancers were caught, when they agreed to a request as here made by Saul. V. 10. **And Saul sware to her by the Lord,** this oath by the name of Jehovah again showing the hardening of his heart, **saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing,** no harm would strike her. V. 11. **Then said the woman,** satisfied that she was now safe, **Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel,** the words indicating the common belief that the dead were in a place somewhere beneath the earth, under the ground, and that their souls could be summoned from there. V. 12. **And when the woman,** after setting into operation her hellish arts, saw Samuel, for it was his form which the evil spirit in whose service she was, assumed, **she cried with a loud voice,** since she now saw clearly that her visitor must be the king himself; **and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul.** V. 13. **And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou?** Up till that time the vision

was still hidden from Saul. **And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods,** a supernatural being, a spiritual form, **ascending out of the earth.** V. 14. **And he said unto her, What form is he of?** He wanted a more exact description of the apparition. **And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel,** the long prophet's mantle having given him the information, as the apparition showed it. **And he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself,** in awe and reverence. Note: That this apparition could not have been the real Samuel is evident from the fact that those who die in the Lord are blessed, their souls are in the bliss of heaven, from henceforth, from the moment of death, and the devil has no jurisdiction over those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. One of Satan's own evil spirits here had to serve the Lord as a messenger proclaiming to Saul his early destruction. Witchcraft, Spiritism, and other forms of superstition are still found in the world, and just as prominently as ever. Many a person who has left the true God seeks counsel and assistance in the dens of Spiritists, mediums, and other soothsayers. As faith goes out, superstition comes in. But what the diviners or clairvoyants state is not all falsehood and deception; for the devil is able, with God's permission, to perform works which, to all appearances, are identical with miracles, and to uncover the future. Christians, therefore, will take the greatest care in fleeing from the temptation of consulting such soothsayers.

The Answer Received by Saul. — V. 15. **And Samuel,** the apparition of the evil spirit which had the form of Samuel, **said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed,** in great straits; **for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee,** have caused thee to be called, **that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.** There was a contradiction in Saul's appeal, which shows that he knew himself to be asking counsel of the devil, for if God would not answer him by the living prophets, what satisfaction could he have gotten from the dead? This is also brought out by the spirit. V. 16. **Then said Samuel, Wherefore, then, dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee and is become thine enemy?** And now the apparition, evidently even now invisible to the eyes of Saul, announces his fate to him. V. 17. **And the Lord hath done to Him,** for Himself, according to His own counsel, **as He spake by me; for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David.** So the complete realization and definite fulfilment of the divine sentence of rejection was now at hand. V. 18. **Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day,** His judgment would now be carried out. V. 19. **Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines,** for the people were guilty with their king; **and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me,** in the kingdom of death; **the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.** The defeat of Israel, the death of Saul and his sons, and the complete destruction of the camp of Israel were the three decisive blows which would fall on Saul. V. 20. **Then Saul,** overcome by the horror of the revelation, **fell straightway all along on the earth,** he suddenly, from his kneeling position, pitched forward at full length on the floor, **and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no bread,** partaken of no food, **all the day nor all the night.** V. 21. **And the woman came unto Saul,** hurried to his side, **and saw that he was sore troubled,** greatly terrified, **and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand,** in exercising her powers of conjuring against the Law of Jehovah and the land, **and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.** She exhibited natural sympathy with the king, worn out by excitement and abstinence from food as he was, this being the consideration which prompted her to offer him her hospitality. V. 22. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee,** urging him, as we would say, to have at least a bite; **and eat that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way.** V. 23. **But he,** still lying on the floor, **refused and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him,** they urged him so long until he was persuaded; **and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed,** the divan, or sofa. V. 24. **And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof,** for there was no time to set yeast; v. 25. **and she brought it before Saul and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up and went away that night.** Thus Saul, in dull despair, ran into his destruction, an example of warning to all who harden their hearts to the influence of the Lord.

CHAPTER 29.

David Dismissed by Achish.

The Objections of the Philistine Princes. V. 1. **Now, the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek,** not far from Shunem, in the Plain of Jezreel; **and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel,** on the northwest slope of Gilboa. V. 2. **And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds and by thousands,** crossing the valley in full battle array, with their officers and princes at their head; **but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish,** the Philistines of Gath forming the rear-guard. V. 3. **Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here?** They may have remembered, from an earlier campaign, that the Israelites in their own army had turned against them and helped to destroy them, chap. 14, 21, or they may have been particularly suspicious of David. **And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul, the king of Israel,** thereby alluding to Saul's enmity toward him, **which hath been with me these days, or these years,** our expression being "a year and a day," **and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?** He had found nothing which would cause him to suspect his loyalty to the Philistine cause. V. 4. **And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him,** that is, the rulers of the four other city-states; **and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him,** to Ziklag, **and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us; for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? Should it not be with the heads of these men?** They felt that it would be the best opportunity for David and his men to reinstate themselves in the favor of Saul by defeating a part of the Philistine army. V. 5. **Is not this David of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?** Cp. chap. 18, 7; 21, 11. The defeat which they had suffered at the time when Goliath had been slain still rankled in their memory, and their recollection of this achievement proved the means of rescuing David from the unpleasant necessity of going into battle on their side, although their fears would probably have been realized in that event. It was an act of grace and mercy on God's part which took him out of the battle.

David's Return to the Land of the Philistines. — V. 6. **Then Achish called David and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth,** for he swore by the Lord of Israel, in order to emphasize the sincerity of his statement, **thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight,** his entire behavior at all times had met with the approval of the Philistine king; **for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day; nevertheless, the lords favor thee not,** they refused to drop their suspicions against him. V. 7. **Wherefore, now, return and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.** V. 8. **And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? And what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee,** literally, "before thee," in thy presence, **unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?** This was again ambiguous, and purposely so, for David would most assuredly not have fought against his own countrymen. V. 9. **And Achish,** accepting David's words as referring to himself, **answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God,** that was his impression and conviction, that David's behavior would have done credit to an angel; **notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.** V. 10. **Wherefore, now, rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants,** the subjects of Saul, **that are come with thee, and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.** V. 11. **So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning,** as soon as it was light enough to see, **to return into the land of the Philistines,** to Ziklag. **And the Philistines went up to Jezreel,** advancing to attack the army of Israel. God's faithfulness in turning aside the evil results of David's foolish move is a source of comfort also to us. He does not let us be tempted above that we are able; He spares us tests and temptations which would be too severe for us, which would endanger our faith. Moreover, the very children of the world who hate us are often instrumental, by God's providence, in having God's good and gracious will fulfilled in us.

CHAPTER 30.

David's Revenge upon the Amalekites.

David's Return to Ziklag. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day,** after leaving the army of Achish in the Plain of Jezreel, **that the Amalekites,** evidently as a reprisal for David's raids upon them, chap. 27, 8, **had invaded the south,** the south country of Judah, **and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag,** defenseless as the city was, **and burned it with fire;** v. 2. **and had taken the women captives that were therein,** intending to make slaves of them and of their children; **they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away and went on their way,** back to their own country. V. 3. **So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters were taken captives.** V. 4. **Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept until they had no more power to weep.** The blow was so sudden, so unexpected, that their sorrow was correspondingly great and their grief bitter. V. 5. **And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal, the Carmelite.** V. 6. **And David was greatly distressed,** deeply oppressed and anxious in spirit; **for the people spake of stoning him,** evidently putting all the blame upon him for joining Achish on his campaign against Israel, **because the soul of all the people was grieved,** full of bitterness, which has a tendency to be unreasonable, **every man for his sons and for his daughters. But David encouraged himself in the Lord, his God,** seeking strength and comfort in prayer and in firm confidence in the Lord, also by a direct inquiry of the Lord. V. 7. **And David said to Abiathar, the priest, Ahimelech's son,** chap. 23, 6. 9, **I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod,** which contained the Urim and Thummim. **And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.** V. 8. **And David enquired at the Lord,** by means of the Urim, **Shall I pursue after this troop,** the raiders who had taken away the women and children? **Shall I overtake them? And He answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them and without fail recover all,** most certainly deliver all the captives from the slavery which threatened them. V. 9. **So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him,** without taking time to rest, **and came to the brook Besor,** which flowed down from the hilly section of Judah and down through the country of the Philistines, **where those that were left behind stayed,** unable to proceed on account of exhaustion. V. 10. **But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor,** the crossing of which seems to have been connected with great difficulties. These men were left behind with the baggage, while their more stalwart brethren followed the enemy. Like David, every Christian, though beset with anxiety and distress, may cheerfully and courageously take up the work assigned to him, after he has strengthened himself with prayer and the Word of God.

David Recovers the Spoil. — V. 11. **And they,** the men with David, **found an Egyptian in the field,** for the Amalekites could easily obtain Egyptian slaves, **and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water,** in order to revive him from his utter exhaustion, for he was almost famished; v. 12. **and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs,** a slice of pressed figs, **and two clusters,** pressed cakes, **of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him,** he recovered, he was filled with new life; **for he had eaten no bread nor drunk any water three days and three nights.** V. 13. **And David said unto him,** when he was strong enough to talk, **To whom belongest thou? And whence are thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant,** slave, **to an Amalekite; and my master left me because three days agone I fell sick.** He had simply been abandoned because his master could not bother with him on their hasty flight. V. 14. **We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites,** a Philistine tribe of the south country, **and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb,** the neighborhood of Hebron; **and we burned Ziklag with fire.** V. 15. **And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company,** to the place where the raiding troop had its permanent camp? **And he said, Swear unto me by God that thou wilt neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.** The caution of the Egyptian was due to the fact that informers and guides were often put to death by those whom they had served, while the hatred of those whom they had betrayed may well be understood. V. 16. **And when he,** the Egyptian, **had brought him,** David with his men, **down, behold, they,** the Amalekites, **were spread abroad upon all the earth,** having abandoned themselves entirely to the enjoyment of their successful raid, not dreaming of the nearness of any enemy, **eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah,** cele-

brating the event with rejoicing. V. 17. **And David, finding them so utterly unprepared, smote them from the twilight,** from the break of day, **even unto the evening of the next day,** literally, "of their morrow," for the Israelites began their day at sundown; it was an all-day battle. **And there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled.** V. 18. **And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away; and David rescued his two wives.** The pursuit was a complete success. V. 19. **And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them; David recovered all,** all the booty from the entire raided district. V. 20. **And David took all the flocks and the herds,** those captured from the Amalekites in addition to the recovered property of the raided territory, **which they drave before those other cattle,** at the head of David's little band, **and said, This is David's spoil.** If matters are only begun with the Lord, then He will give His blessing and success in due season.

The Distribution of the Spoil. — V. 21. **And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor,** David having given this order on account of their great exhaustion; **and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him; and when David came near to the people, he saluted them,** giving them a friendly greeting, wishing them peace and happiness. V. 22. **Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial,** vain and profitless fools, **of those that went with David,** for even in that band there were such, **and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away and depart,** literally, "But every man his wife and his children; these let them lead away and go." They held the selfish idea that, because the two hundred had not shared in the danger, they should neither share the spoil. V. 23. **Then said David,** his tactful gentleness averting a rupture in the ranks which might have become a calamity, **Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.** The success of their venture had been due entirely to Jehovah and His blessing and could, therefore, in no way be regarded as their own achievement. V. 24. **For who will hearken unto you in this matter?** The majority would certainly not share their selfish sentiments. **But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff,** who remains behind to watch the baggage; **they shall part alike,** share according to the same division. V. 25. **And it was so from that day forward, that he,** David, **made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.** It was a rule which held as late as the time of the Maccabees, being considered just and fair to all. V. 26. **And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil,** after every one of his men had recovered what had been taken from him and other booty besides, **unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you, a gift of blessing, of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord;** v. 27. **to them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in South Ramoth,** the city of this name in the south country, **and to them which were in Jattir,** v. 28. **and to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa,** v. 29. **and to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites,** v. 30. **and to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach,** v. 31. **and to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt,** who had shown kindness to him when he was a fugitive. All the cities here mentioned, some of which have been identified quite certainly, are in the southern and southwestern part of the territory of Judah. Note: If the Lord lays His blessing upon our endeavors, it behooves us to share it with others as there is need or occasion.

CHAPTER 31.

Death and Burial of Saul and His Sons.

Death of Saul and His Sons. — V. 1. **Now, the Philistines,** whose armies had been placed in battle array in the Plain of Jezreel, chap. 29, 1. 2, **fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines,** as Saul had been told, **and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa,** where they fled from the valley upon the attack of the Philistine forces. V. 2. **And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons, they pursued him** with great tenacity, they hung closely at his feet, they strove to overtake him; **and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons,** chap. 14, 49. V. 3. **And the battle went sore against Saul,** literally, "toward" him, for the whole weight of the battle turned in his direction,

and the archers hit him, striking him from all sides with arrows; **and he was sore wounded of the archers,** rather, he was much frightened, for he saw no way of escaping the enemy's superior forces, since the battle had apparently resolved itself into individual combats on the part of Israel. V. 4. **Then said Saul unto his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised,** the Philistines, **come and thrust me through, and abuse me,** torture him cruelly before putting him to death. **But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid,** he was responsible for the king's life and felt too much awe for his person. **Therefore Saul took a sword, and,** turning the point toward his own body, **fell upon it,** committed suicide. V. 5. **And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword and died with him.** V. 6. **So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men,** those of his immediate neighborhood, his body-guard, **that same day together.** That was the end of the man who had once had the Spirit of God and had been filled with power from above. Those who forsake the Lord are truly forsaken, and therefore in the end have no comfort, no help in the hour of death, but go their way into eternal destruction.

Burial of Saul at Jabesh-Gilead. — V. 7. **And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley,** in the hill-country toward the north and northeast, **and they that were on the other side Jordan,** apparently such as had not been mustered in the army, **saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities,** for fear that they could not hold them anyway, **and fled; and the Philistines,** eventually, at the end of the campaign, **came and dwelt in them.** V. 8. **And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain,** to take their garments, jewelry, and weapons as booty, **that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in Mount Gilboa.** V. 9. **And they cut off his,** Saul's, **head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about,** evidently using these grim trophies to announce their victory, **to publish it in the house of their idols and among the people,** for they ascribed their victory to their idols. V. 10. **And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth,** their chief female goddess, whose largest temple was at Askelon; **and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan,** a city in the valley of the Jordan which had been occupied by the Philistines as a result of the battle. V. 11. **And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead,** the city in the country east of Jordan which had been saved from the Ammonites by Saul's timely intervention, chap. 11, **heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul;** v. 12. **all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan,** under cover of night, **and came to Jabesh, and burned them there,** their mutilation probably rendering them unfit for burial. V. 13. **And they took their bones,** the charred remains after the flesh had burned off, **and buried them under a tree,** a well-known tamarisk, **at Jabesh, and fasted seven days,** in deep mourning over the death of their benefactor, a touching and rare example of gratitude. Saul, although rejected by God, had been in fact king of Israel until his death. We also should honor those in authority, even if they are godless rascals, for the sake of the office given to them by God, which makes them His representatives.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

INTRODUCTION.

This book is merely a continuation of the First Book of Samuel, having originally formed a single book with it. So far, then, as authorship, probable date of writing, and other questions pertaining to the general understanding of the book are concerned, the remarks in the introduction to the first book apply. The Second Book of Samuel contains the history of David's rule over Judah and Israel, seven years in Hebron over Judah only, thirty-three years in Jerusalem over the entire nation, during which time the Golden Age of the Old Testament was ushered in. There is also a full account of David's transgression and of his subsequent repentance, while the last chapters tell of the end of his reign.

The Second Book of Samuel, like the First, is full of special interest to us believers of the New Testament, because it pictures to us the frailty of the human heart, even in the case of men who stood high in the estimate of the Lord. The sins of David were not overlooked or condoned by God, but received the sharpest reprimand. But, on the other hand, as soon as David's repentance was evident, the Lord most graciously forgave his sins, even where He did not absolve him of their effects. The book should be studied with these facts in mind.

CHAPTER 1.

David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan.

THE MESSAGE OF THE AMALEKITE. — V. 1. **Now it came to pass after the death of Saul,** as related in the last chapter, **when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites,** 1 Sam. 30, **and David had abode two days in Ziklag,** v. 2. **it came even to pass on the third day that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul,** a man who had fought in the Israelitish army, **with his clothes rent and earth upon his head,** as a sign of the deepest grief; **and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth and did obeisance,** giving homage to David as the future king. V. 3. **And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel,** out of the army in the field, **am I escaped,** indicating, even here, that a great calamity had befallen the host. V. 4. **And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me.** The question, How was the affair, How did things go? is at the same time an exclamation of dismay. **And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle,** the army being broken up in wild confusion, **and many of the people also are fallen and dead,** in addition to Saul's body-guard, which had been cut down to the last man, 1 Sam. 31, 6; **and Saul and Jonathan, his son, are dead also.** This was the climax of his sad message. V. 5. **And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan, his son, be dead?** V. 6. **And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa,** in the confusion of the battle and of the flight, **behold, Saul leaned upon his spear,** apparently so exhausted and weak that he found it difficult to stand up alone; **and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.** It is here that the messenger's falsehoods begin, for it was out of the question for the chariots of the Philistines to follow the fleeing army into the hills. V. 7. **And when he,** Saul, **looked behind him, he saw me and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.** V. 8. **And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.** Here again the improbability of the report is apparent, since Saul would hardly have been standing alone, with not a single Israelite, not even an armor-bearer, to come to his assistance. V. 9. **He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me,** by stepping up very closely to him, **and slay me; for anguish is come upon me,** he had been seized with a cramp and found himself unable to wield his weapons, **because my life is yet whole in me,** and he was afraid lest, in his defenseless condition, he would suffer the indignity of falling into the hands of the Philistines. V. 10. **So I stood upon him,** went closely up to him, **and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after he was fallen,** he would not survive this defeat; **and I took the crown that was upon his head and the bracelet that was on his arm,** for men, especially army officers, wore arm-bands as a mark of their rank, **and have brought them,** the symbols of the royal dignity, **hither unto my lord.** The man's idea was to secure the favor of David by his action and obtain a rich reward. V. 11. **Then David took hold on his clothes and rent them,** as a sign of uncontrollable grief, **and likewise all the men that were with him,** not only out of deference to David, but because they were aware of the significance of this defeat for the whole nation; v. 12. **and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even,** abandoning themselves to their grief as it swept over them, **for Saul, and for Jonathan, his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel,** the king, the prince, the army, and the entire nation all coming in to make their grief very great, **because they were fallen by the sword.** The people of the Lord, by a holy covenant, had in this battle been abandoned by Jehovah; the house of Israel, all descendants of the same patriarch, was overthrown. V. 13. **And David said unto the young man that told him,** who had distorted the facts and lied in order to gain the favor of David, as though he had killed a dangerous enemy, **Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite,** of a man who had settled in Israel, but had not yet been acknowledged as a member. V. 14. **And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?** What David had not dared to do, out of respect for the king's position and person, this stranger, by his own confession, had profanely done, and evidently in hopes of a reward. V. 15. **And David called one of the young men and said, Go near and fall upon him.** David here spoke the sentence of death by virtue of his position as Saul's successor, upon a self-confessed murderer. **And he smote him that he died.** V. 16. **And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head,** this bloody punishment was in agreement with the crime which he had confessed to; **for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.** David thus avenged a notorious and shocking political crime. If a person accuses himself of some transgression and glories in a crime which he did not commit, he shows a disposition which is guilty before God, and need not be astonished if he is judged according to his own words.

David's Lament. — V. 17. **And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan, his son;** he composed this elegy, or song of mourning, as an expression of his deep and sincere grief over the death of the king and of his dearest friend v. 18. **(also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow,** he commanded that this song be practised, learned by heart; **behold, it is written in the Book of Jasher,** it was a battle-song recorded in the Book of the Upright, and the bow was afterwards a very important weapon in Israel): v. 19. **The beauty,** the glory, **of Israel is slain upon thy high places,** namely, by the death of Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa. **How are the mighty fallen!** V. 20. **Tell it not in Gath, publish,** announce, **it not in the streets of Askelon,** these being two of the five large Philistine cities, **lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.** If Philistia should learn of the death of the heroes of Israel, there would be, and there undoubtedly was, a scornful joy over the victory. V. 21. **Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you nor fields of offerings,** of first-fruits; the heavens should withhold their moisture, and the earth should refuse to give her increase, as a sign of mourning over the defeat; **for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,** defiled with dust and blood, **the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil;** no one was there to take the shield, the emblem of the leader of the army, out of the dirt to clean and to polish its surface anew. V. 22. **From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,** considered a sign of great strength, **the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty;** both heroes were accustomed to gain complete victories, to destroy every opposing enemy, their bravery, their prowess, was known far and wide. V. 23. **Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant,** worthy of love, beloved, and amiable, **in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.** United by love in life, they were bound together in death, together they gave their lives for Israel. **They were swifter than eagles,** distinguished for quickness and agility; **they were stronger than lions,** of lionlike courage and strength. V. 24. **Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet,** in crimson or purple garments from the booty of war, **with other delights,** adornments that pleased them; **who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel,** as a proof of his kingly largess. V. 25. **How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places!** Here the key-note of the entire lament is once more sounded, with special reference to Jonathan. V. 26. **I am distressed for thee,** filled with anxious thoughts by reason of grief and mourning, **my brother Jonathan; very pleasant,** beloved, **hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women,** known for the depth of their affection and devotion. V. 27. **How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war,** the heroes of Israel, as the instruments of battle, **perished!** The elegy was a national song and preserved the names of Saul and Jonathan in Israel. True love and friendship requires that a person mourn the loss of a friend and always keep him in fond remembrance.

CHAPTER 2.

David King over Judah.

David at Hebron. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after this that David enquired of the Lord,** by means of the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, 1 Sam. 23, 2. 10. 11; 30, 7—9, **saying, Shall I go up,** namely, from the lowlands of Philistia, **into any of the cities of Judah,** this being his own tribe? **And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up,** that is, to which special city or district? **And He said, Unto Hebron,** about twenty miles south of Jerusalem and near the center of the territory of Judah. V. 2. **So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite,** 1 Sam. 30, 5. V. 3. **And his men that were with him did David bring up,** the six hundred men who had been faithful to him in his adversity, **every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron,** the suburbs in the vicinity. V. 4. **And the men of Judah came,** the elders of his own tribe, **and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah,** the affairs of the northern tribes at that time being in a condition of chaos. **And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul.** This seems to have been in answer to David's inquiry concerning the disposition of the bodies of Saul and Jonathan, his first official act after his crowning. V. 5. **And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead,** the city east of Jordan, whose inhabitants had been rescued by Saul and had, in gratitude, gotten his body from the walls of Beth-shan, 1 Sam. 31, 11—13, **and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the Lord that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him;** they had shown that grateful love which became them

in their relation to Saul as their king. V. 6. **And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you,** favor, gracious, faithful love in fulfilling all His promises for their benefit; **and I also,** by virtue of the royal authority now vested in him, **will requite you this kindness,** by calling down the divine blessing upon them, **because ye have done this thing.** V. 7. **Therefore, now, let your hands be strengthened,** with a strong and cheerful courage, **and be ye valiant,** literally, "sons of valor or bravery"; **for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.** This message of David was a wise diplomatic move, particularly since the remnant of Saul's army had fled to Gilead, and there was danger that the heads of the army would not acknowledge David. V. 8. **But Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul,** this had evidently been done even before David sent his messengers, **and brought him over to Mahanaim,** a city in Gilead northeast of Jabesh, v. 9. **and made him king over Gilead,** the country east of Jordan, **and over the Ashurites,** probably in the territory of the upper Jordan, **and over Jezreel,** the entire plain of the recent defeat, **and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel,** all the northern tribes. V. 10. **Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah,** with the descendants of Simeon living in their midst, **followed David.** V. 11. **And the time,** the total number of days, **that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.** Thus the suffering and persecution which had darkened the life of David was now turned into joy. Even so, days of refreshing joy follow days of darkness in the lives of the Christians; for when God finds that faith has been sufficiently tested through afflictions, He changes tribulation into glory.

DAVID'S WAR WITH ISHBOSHETH. — V. 12. **And Abner, the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon;** they crossed to the western side of Jordan, into the territory of Benjamin, in order to wage war against David and to conquer Judah. V. 13. **And Joab, the son of Zeruiah,** a nephew of David and the general of his armies, **and the servants of David,** who had prepared for such an attack, **went out and met together by the Pool of Gibeon,** the two opposing armies meeting at the reservoir some six miles north of Jerusalem, **and they sat down, encamped, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.** V. 14. **And Abner said to Joab,** proposing to decide the matter by individual contests, **Let the young men now arise and play before us,** here said of a serious battle-play, a combat of arms which was more than a game. **And Joab,** agreeing to the proposal to avoid a bloody civil war, if possible, **said, Let them arise.** V. 15. **Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David,** these chosen warriors meeting, apparently, midway between the lines. V. 16. **And they caught every one his fellow,** his opponent, **by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side,** in a quick motion showing their excellent military training, but also the bitterness usually present in a civil war; **so they fell down together,** in a mutual slaughter, the twenty-four being slain at the same time; **wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim** (field of sword-edges), **which is in Gibeon.** V. 17. **And,** the individual combats having been a failure in deciding the issue, **there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.** A special scene of the pursuit which followed the defeat of the men of Israel, featuring champions of the family of David, is now given. V. 18. **And there were three sons of Zeruiah there,** all nephews of David, **Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel; and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe,** as swift as the gazelles of the field. V. 19. **And Asahel pursued after Abner,** for his capture would be the decisive blow ending the battle; **and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner,** determined to accomplish his purpose. V. 20. **Then Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou Asahel?** For he had evidently heard of him. **And he answered, I am.** V. 21. **And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, one of the privates, and take thee his armor,** for he thought that Asahel was merely seeking the glory of having slain an enemy, knowing that his own skill was much more than a match for the eager young man. **But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him,** he wanted to realize his ambition. V. 22. **And Abner said again to Asahel,** in a last attempt at warning him, **Turn thee aside from following me; wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? How, then, could I hold up my face to Joab, thy brother?** His former friendship for Joab was such as to make it very unpleasant for him in case he should meet David's general afterwards. V. 23. **Howbeit he,** Asahel, **refused to turn aside; wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear,** with the lower metallic point, **smote him under the fifth rib,** in the abdomen, **that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place. And it came to pass**

that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still; for he had been held in high regard by all, and therefore his death caused a general mourning. V. 24. **And Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner,** with the same persistence. **And the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the Wilderness of Gibeon.** So the pursuit ended east of Gibeon, after it had lasted all day. V. 25. **And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner,** rallying for a last decided stand, **and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill,** a favorable position to await an attack. V. 26. **Then Abner called to Joab and said, Shall the sword devour forever,** in an endless bloody combat? **Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?** In a civil war of this kind there was always danger that sullen despair would cause such a wave of embittered feeling to arise as to make reconciliation extremely difficult. **How long shall it be, then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?** It was an urgent demand to suspend hostilities at once and to agree to a truce. V. 27. **And Joab said, As God liveth,** unless **thou hadst spoken,** suggesting the method of individual combat, **surely then in the morning the people had gone up, every one, from following his brother.** He held that Abner was responsible for the stubborn battle of the day, for they might have come to an agreement without bloodshed. V. 28. **So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still,** the battle was discontinued, **and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more,** they concluded a truce. V. 29. **And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain,** marching up the valley of the Jordan to the place where they had forded, **and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron,** evidently a district on the Jabbok; **and they came to Mahanaim,** where their headquarters were at the time. V. 30. **And Joab returned from following Abner; and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel,** very likely including the twelve that fell in single combat. V. 31. **But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.** Joab had in his army only veteran soldiers, tried by many severe battles and steeled by many privations, while Abner had merely the remains of an army which had but recently been defeated by the Philistines, and which may otherwise have been weakened and discouraged. V. 32. **And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulcher of his father, which was in Bethlehem,** only a little to the left of the direct road to Hebron. **And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.** Note: Christians should be glad to take upon themselves the disgrace and suffering of Christ, the Son of David, to be zealous for Him and His honor, to battle for His cause with the weapons of the Spirit, in order that the kingdom and rule of the Anointed may be spread over the world.

CHAPTER 3.

Abner, having Joined David, Murdered by Joab.

Abner Leaves Ishbosheth for David. — V. 1. **Now, there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David,** literally, "the war was protracted," a state of war continued to exist, since neither acknowledged the other as king, although outward hostilities were apparently not renewed; **but David,** patiently waiting and relying upon the promise of Jehovah, **waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker;** David gained in adherents in the same measure as Ishbosheth lost them. V. 2. **And unto David were sons born in Hebron; and his first-born was Amnon, of Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess;** v. 3. **and his second, Chileab** (or Daniel, 1 Chron. 3, 1), **of Abigail, the wife of Nabal, the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom, the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur,** a small principality in Syria; v. 4. **and the fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah, the son of Abital;** v. 5. **and the sixth Ithream, by Eglah, David's wife.** The three women mentioned last are otherwise unknown. **These were born to David in Hebron,** the fruit of his strange polygamous marriages. V. 6. **And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David,** while the state of hostility continued, **that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul,** his strong influence enabled the house of Saul to maintain itself. V. 7. **And Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?** The reproof was given because Abner, by his action, had presumed upon royal rights, for in the ancient Orient claim to the harem was claim to the throne, the suspicion thus being that he aspired to be king. V. 8. **Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth,** for he seems to have been self-willed

and presumptuous in his conduct toward the weak man whom he had made king, **and said, Am I a dog's head,** a low, contemptible person, **which against Judah,** who sides with Judah? **(I) do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul, thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?** Ishbosheth owed position, kingdom, everything to Abner, who seems to have been on his side merely out of loyalty for Saul; but there was no personal bond between them, and Abner regarded the charge flung into his face as an insult. V. 9. **So do God to Abner, and more also,** a strong oath of a vigorous, autocratic man, **except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him,** v. 10. to translate the **kingdom from the house of Saul,** to take it away and transfer it, **and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba,** from the extreme north to the extreme south of Canaan. Abner had evidently recognized the fact, even before this, that Ishbosheth was wholly unfit for the kingly rule, and the latter's charge now brought matters to a head. V. 11. **And he,** Ishbosheth, **could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him,** he was too feeble, too cowardly, to back up his reproof with action. V. 12. **And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf,** as an embassy representing him, **saying, Whose is the land?** His pride caused him to intimate that he was the real master of Israel. **Saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee to bring about all Israel unto thee,** to get all the northern tribes to acknowledge David, with the expectation that he would be given a high position in the army of the united country. V. 13. **And he,** David, **said, Well; I will make a league with thee; but one thing I require of thee,** this was his one condition upon whose fulfilment he insisted, **that is, Thou shalt not see my face except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.** It was not merely that Michal was his lawful wife, but David had also a political reason in his union with Israel's princess, namely, that of gaining the favor of the northern tribes. V. 14. **And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines,** that being the purchase price, the morning gift which Saul had demanded, 1 Sam. 18, 25. V. 15. **And Ishbosheth,** who would not have been able to refuse the demand of David even if he had been so inclined, **sent and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel, the son of Laish,** the man who seems to have taken her in good faith, 1 Sam. 25, 44. V. 16. **And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim,** on the boundary of Judah, his behavior showing that he was truly fond of Michal. **Then said Abner,** who, in accordance with David's condition, had taken charge of this mission, **unto him, Go, return. And he returned.** V. 17. **And Abner,** even before he restored Michal to her rightful husband, **had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past,** literally, "yesterday as well as the day before," **to be king over you,** their dissatisfaction with Ishbosheth had probably been voiced more than once; v. 18. **now, then, do it; for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines and out of the hand of all their enemies.** This was the promise implied in the prophetic tradition and the duty laid upon the king chosen by Jehovah. V. 19. **And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin,** here distinguished from the northern tribes, because its members had been very strongly attached to the house of Saul; **and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.** In return for their recognition of David's royal authority they wanted the same advantages as the men of Judah; they were fully ready to acknowledge him. V. 20. **So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him,** as representatives of all Israel, as witnesses of the covenant. **And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast,** a formal festival meal. V. 21. **And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king that they may make a league with thee,** acknowledging him as the chosen king of Jehovah, through whom, as His instrument, the Lord Himself would rule over His people, **and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth,** over the entire people of God. **And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace,** regarded by David as a true friend to his cause. Even the adversaries of God and Christ are often instrumental in carrying out the counsel of God and in furthering the cause of Christ. And many a person who first strongly opposed the Lord has been brought to a better understanding and has embraced the good cause.

ABNER MURDERED BY JOAB, MOURNED BY DAVID. — V. 22. **And, behold, the servants of David and Joab,** the latter being the general of the army of Judah, **came from pursuing a troop,** they had been out on a raid against one of the neighboring nations, **and brought in a great spoil with them,** such expeditions being necessary at that time to support the army. **But Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and**

he was gone in peace, dismissed as on the best footing with David. V. 23. **When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab,** some people promptly informed him, **saying, Abner, the son of Ner, came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.** V. 24. **Then Joab,** who was filled with hatred against Abner, **came to the king and said, What hast thou done? Behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away,** instead of holding him captive? **And he is quite gone;** no one had made a move to secure him. V. 25. **Thou knowest Abner, the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee,** with an evil and hostile purpose, **and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.** In his reproach of David, Joab accused Abner of being a spy, a traitor, who was seeking information favorable to his schemes. The object was, of course, to make David so unfavorably disposed toward Abner that he would overlook the revenge which Joab was planning. V. 26. **And when Joab was come out from David,** after this interview, **he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well,** or cistern, **of Sirah,** for he had progressed to that point when the messengers reached him; **but David knew it not,** he was unacquainted with Joab's plans, much less did he approve of them. V. 27. **And when Abner was returned to Hebron,** undoubtedly under the impression that David had some further instructions for him, **Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly,** in secret, in private, his attendants therefore retiring, **and smote him there under the fifth rib,** in the abdomen, **that he died, for the blood of Asahel, his brother,** for whom Joab considered himself an avenger. Joab's deed was murder and cast false suspicions on David; his real ground for committing it was false ambition and envy, for he feared that he would be superseded by the more renowned Abner. V. 28. **And afterward, when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord forever from the blood of Abner, the son of Ner.** V. 29. **Let it,** the guilt, **rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house,** the punishment of God should turn, roll, plunge upon the entire family of Joab; **and let there not fail from the house of Joab,** not one escaping this fate, **one that hath an issue,** Lev. 15, 2, **or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff,** being a cripple, **or that falleth on the sword,** finding his death in battle, **or that lacketh bread.** Terrible sicknesses, violent deaths, and poverty: those were the afflictions with which the posterity of Joab was ever to be punished. V. 30. **So Joab and Abishai, his brother,** who was an accomplice, **slew Abner because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.** The deed showed traits in Joab's character which appeared once more at a later time, in the murder of Amasa, chap. 20, 10. V. 31. **And David said to Joab and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth,** the signs of deepest grief, **and mourn before Abner,** in the presence of his corpse, by an official lamentation. **And King David himself followed the bier,** his share in the ceremonies showing the deep personal sorrow which he felt. V. 32. **And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner,** his tears being further evidence of the genuineness of his grief; **and all the people wept,** sharing his trouble and his sympathy. V. 33. **And the king lamented over Abner,** in an elegy expressing his deepest sorrow over Abner's innocent and shameful death, **and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth,** like a good-for-nothing, worthless fellow? V. 34. **Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters,** he was not guilty of any crime; **as a man falleth before wicked men,** before assassins, **so fellest thou,** murdered in malice. **And all the people,** moved by the lament of this elegy, **wept again over him.** V. 35. **And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat,** to partake of food, **while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me and more also if I taste bread or aught else till the sun be down;** his grief culminated in his voluntary fasting. V. 36. **And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people,** he won the love and confidence of the people by his manner of acting and freed himself from all suspicion of complicity in the murder of Abner. V. 37. **For all the people,** those present in Hebron, **and all Israel,** to whom the news was brought, **understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner, the son of Ner.** V. 38. **And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?** Abner had been a prince by reason of his distinguished military ability, and a great man on account of his lofty character and virtues of value to the nation. V. 39. **And I am this day weak,** still powerless to act as the occasion really required, **though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me,** he did not feel able as yet to bring them to justice. **The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.** Into Jehovah's hands, for the present, David placed this matter for adjustment. If fleshly zeal, anger, jealousy, revenge, are the motives actuating a person, the Lord will punish him in due time.

CHAPTER 4.

Murder of Ishbosheth.

ISHBOSHETH MURDERED. — V. 1. **And when Saul's son, Ishbosheth, heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, slack, he completely lost heart, and all the Israelites were troubled,** not only terrified, but completely at a loss what to do next. Things became altogether unsettled, chaos reigned in Israel. V. 2. **And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands,** bold, adventurous men who had divisions of the former Israelitish army under their command. **The name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the son of Rimmon, a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin. (For Beeroth,** although on its extreme western boundary, also was reckoned to Benjamin, Josh. 18, 25. V. 3. **And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim,** probably because the Philistines had captured Beeroth, and were sojourners there until this day.) V. 4. **And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet,** the last representative of Saul's house after Ishbosheth, a cripple and a minor. **He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel,** at the time of the great defeat by the Philistines, 1 Sam. 29, 1. 11, **and his nurse took him up and fled; and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth** (or Meribbaal, 1 Chron. 8, 34). V. 5. **And the sons of Rimmon, the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon,** on the midday-bed, during the drowsiest part of the day, the time of the daily siesta, when men were not so alert as at other times. V. 6. **And they came thither into the midst of the house,** as though they **would have fetched wheat,** grain to distribute to their soldiers, which was probably stored off the court or open space in the center of the house. Their presence for such a purpose would attract no attention. **And they smote him under the fifth rib,** through the abdomen; **and Rechab and Baanah, his brother, escaped.** V. 7. **For when they came into the house,** which was open to them by reason of their position in the army, **he lay on his bed in his bedchamber,** in the inner, more remote section of the house, **and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night,** they fled down the valley of the Jordan. V. 8. **And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and of his seed.** To their crime of cold-blooded assassination they added that of blasphemy by ascribing the success of their deed to Jehovah. The object of the murderers evidently was to commend themselves to David and to obtain a reward of some kind. It is impossible to correct a wrong by committing a wrong, for the punishment of all crimes is in the hands of the authorities, who have received their power from God.

THE MURDER AVENGED. — V. 9. **And David answered Rechab and Baanah, his brother, the sons of Rimmon, the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,** from all the suffering with which he had been afflicted, thus putting him beyond the necessity of freeing himself from his enemies by crime, v. 10. **when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead,** namely, the Amalekite who came to Ziklag, chap. 1, 2, **thinking to have brought good tidings,** literally, "and he was as a bringer of good tidings in his own eyes," **I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings,** or, in order to give him the reward, to inflict on him the punishment which he deserved; v. 11. **how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed?** Ishbosheth, although connected with a wrong cause, was himself without falsehood and blameless; he was not out on a raiding expedition or engaged in anything wrong, but was at home, doing no one any harm. **Shall I not, therefore, now require his blood of your hand,** God Himself being the chief avenger of blood and the king His instrument in carrying out justice upon the murderers, **and take you away from the earth?** V. 12. **And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands,** which had committed the murder, **and their feet,** which had hurried after the reward, **and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron,** a public place visited by many people, as a testimony to David's just severity against criminals of this kind. **But they took the head of Ishbosheth,** which the murderers had brought along as a trophy of their deed, **and buried it in the sepulcher of Abner in Hebron.** Note: As David finally subdued all his enemies who challenged his right to be king over Israel, so Christ, the Son of David, having conquered all enemies of mankind, will finally obtain the eternal victory.

CHAPTER 5.

David King of the Entire Nation.

David Anointed King over All Israel. — V. 1. **Then, after the death of both Abner and Ishbosheth, came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh,** they were all kinsmen of blood by descent from a common ancestor, David not being a foreign usurper, a stranger coming into the country from elsewhere. V. 2. **Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel,** 1 Sam. 18, 13. 16, he had been the most trusted leader in their military campaigns; **and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel,** like a shepherd taking the most tender care of the sheep entrusted to him, **and thou shalt be a captain over Israel,** their prince in defending them from their enemies. This was the last and strongest ground for their proposal, the Lord's immediate call, as based upon the word of God to Samuel, 1 Sam. 15, 28; for the prophets of Naioth in Ramah undoubtedly made this fact known. Note that the king's function as shepherd of the people is mentioned first, a hint for the rulers of all times. V. 3. **So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron,** as the representatives of the tribes; **and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord,** a covenant in the presence of God, David accepting their promise of obedience and assuring them of a just and merciful reign. **And they anointed David king over Israel,** the anointing by Samuel, 1 Sam. 16, 1. 12, being now confirmed by that of the entire people. V. 4. **David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.** V. 5. **In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.** Cp. 1 Chron. 29, 27. After the long years of suffering, privations, and persecutions, David now enjoyed the fulfilment of God's promise to him. In the midst of all tribulations and afflictions the believers still look up to God, knowing that they will yet bless Him who is the help of their countenance and their God.

Jerusalem Made the Capital. — V. 6. **And the king and his men,** all the soldiers of the regular army, **went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land,** for this heathen tribe of the hill country still held the fortress of the city, Judg. 1, 21; **which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither,** literally, "Not wilt thou come in, but there will drive thee away the blind and the lame"; **thinking,** the Jebusites meant to say, **David cannot come in hither.** They were so firmly convinced that their fortress was impregnable that they considered the blind and the lame a sufficient guard for the defense of its walls. V. 7. **Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion,** the southern and highest hill of Jerusalem; **the same is the City of David.** The name Zion afterwards was applied to the Temple of Jehovah situated on this hill, and so finally was used as a designation of the Church of God, both in the Old and in the New Testament. A special incident of the siege of Jerusalem is now mentioned. V. 8. **And David said on that day,** while preparing to storm the fortress, **Whosoever getteth up to the gutter and smiteth the Jebusites and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain,** 1 Chron. 11, 6—9. The difficult passage is best rendered: Every one who conquers the Jebusites, let him cast into the waterfall both the lame and the blind, hated of David's soul. The expression "blind and lame" applied to all the Jebusites, and the order to throw the slain down the declivity was given in order to gain space for the hand-to-hand encounter in the fortress. **Wherefore they said,** it became a proverbial saying, **The blind and the lame, undesirable people like the Jebusites, shall not come into the house.** V. 9. **So David dwelt in the fort,** making the castle his residence, **and called it the City of David. And David built round about from Millo,** the citadel or fortification proper, **and inward;** the fort being on the most exposed point, he strengthened the defenses between it and his residence. Thus the entire upper city became one huge fortress. V. 10. **And David went on and grew great,** he continued to gain in power, influence, and prestige, **and the Lord God of hosts,** Jehovah God of Sabaoth, **was with him.** He owed not only his kingdom, but all the success which attended him to the blessing of the covenant God. Jerusalem, nearer to the center of Canaan than Hebron, was now the capital of all the tribes. V. 11. **And Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David,** a formal embassy, in order to establish friendly relations with the neighboring state, **and cedar-trees, whose wood** was much used for costly buildings, **and carpenters, and masons; and they built David an house,** the first fine palace of the kings of Judah. V. 12. **And David perceived,** from the success which attended all his undertakings, **that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake,** because He had chosen Israel for His people and promised to make it great and powerful. V. 13. **And David took him more concubines and wives of Jerusalem,** according to the custom of Oriental monarchs, **after he was come from Hebron.** In the law per-

taining to kings, Deut. 17, 17, the taking of many wives had indeed been forbidden the kings of Israel, and David found out to his sorrow that his following the custom of the heathen kings brought him much trouble and heartache. **And there were yet sons and daughters born to David.** V. 14. **And these be the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon,** v. 15. **Ibhar also, and Elishua** (or Elishama, 1 Chron. 3, 6), **and Nepheg, and Jephia,** v. 16. **and Elishama, and Eliada** (or Beeliada, 1 Chron. 14, 7), **and Eliphalet.** Thus God was with David and established his rule, for under His blessing alone true progress is possible.

TWO VICTORIES OF DAVID OVER THE PHILISTINES. — V. 17. **But when the Philistines heard that they,** the people of Israel, **had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines,** all the armies of the confederate city-states, **came up to seek David,** marching up from the lowlands, where they had mobilized their forces, to the highlands of Judah, to attack and subdue this new king before he had become too strong. **And David heard of it, and went down,** from his palace, **to the hold,** the citadel of Mount Zion, where he could make preparations for either an offensive or a defensive campaign. V. 18. **The Philistines also came and spread themselves in,** occupied and used for their camp, **the Valley of Rephaim,** a fruitful plain southwest of Jerusalem, well suited for military maneuvers. V. 19. **And David enquired of the Lord,** in the usual manner, by means of the Urim and Thummim, Ex. 28, 30, **saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines,** venture to attack them? **Wilt Thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.** V. 20. **And David came to Baal-perazim. And David smote them there,** in a sudden, violent attack, **and said, The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me as the breach of waters,** as when a strong torrent breaks down all obstructions and sweeps everything before it. **Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim** (plain of breaches). V. 21. **And there they,** the Philistines, **left their images,** the figures of their idols, which they had taken along to assure them the victory. **And David and his men burned them.** Thus the disgrace of the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines was avenged. V. 22. **And the Philistines came up yet again,** venturing a second campaign in their anxiety to regain their power over Israel, **and spread themselves in the Valley of Rephaim,** as upon the first invasion. V. 23. **And when David enquired of the Lord,** as before, **He said, Thou shalt not go up,** not in a direct attack in the front; **but fetch a compass behind them,** make a wide detour around to their rear, **and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees,** the baca-trees, small, shrublike trees which exude sap like tears when their twigs or leaves are bruised. V. 24. **And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going,** as of an advancing army, **in the tops of the mulberry-trees,** they being moved as by a strong wind, while there was no wind blowing, **that then thou shalt bestir thyself,** be sharp, rush quickly to the attack; **for then shall the Lord go out before thee,** with His own invincible army, **to smite the host of the Philistines.** V. 25. **And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba,** northwest of Jerusalem, **until thou come to Gazer,** on the northern edge of the Philistine plain. It was the Lord who gave the enemies into the hands of David. Note: David is a type of Christ. Those who accept Him as their King are assured of His blessing. But all the kings and nations that rebel against His rule will not continue. The King of Grace blesses, strengthens, and protects His kingdom on earth.

CHAPTER 6.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem.

THE FIRST ATTEMPT ENDS SADLY. — V. 1. **Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel,** the captains and leaders of the army, together with the best soldiers of the nation, **thirty thousand.** V. 2. **And David arose and went with all the people that were with him, from Baale of Judah,** to Kirjath-baal or Kirjath-jearim, **to bring up from thence the ark of God,** which had been in the house of Abinadab some seventy years, since the time that the Philistines had returned this trophy, 1 Sam. 7, **whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim;** for at the ark, before the ark, the name of Jehovah Sabaoth, who appeared over the cover of the ark, between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, was invoked. V. 3. **And they set the ark of God,** literally, "let it ride," **upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah,** on the hill; **and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab,** here probably in the sense of grandsons of Abinadab, and sons of Eleazar, who had been the first guardian of the ark, **drave the new cart.** Strictly speaking, this mode of transporting the ark did not agree

with the legal requirement, which demanded that the ark should always be carried by Levitical priests, Num. 7, 9. V. 4. **And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah,** on the hill, **accompanying the ark of God,** the two men acting as guardians; **and Ahio went before the ark,** while Uzzah walked along at the side of the cart. V. 5. **And David and all the house of Israel,** the entire assembled multitude, **played before the Lord,** in His honor, **on all manner of instruments made of fir-wood,** with all their might, and with songs, 1 Chron. 13, 8, **even on harps,** the Jewish zithers, **and on psalteries,** small harps held in the hand, **and on timbrels,** tabrets or hand-drums, **and on cornets,** sistrums, instruments which gave forth a musical sound when shaken in time with the rest of the music, **and on cymbals,** the well-known metal plates used to this day. V. 6. **And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor,** a permanent floor along the road leading to Jerusalem, probably covered with a roof, **Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it;** in stepping to the side of the road or in slipping they jostled the ark, so that it seemed about to fall off. V. 7. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah,** for the unauthorized touching of the ark, as of the throne of God's glory in the midst of Israel, was a profanation of the Lord's majesty; **and God smote him there for his error,** for his rash mistake in touching the ark; **and there he died by the ark of God,** he was struck down immediately. V. 8. **And David was displeased,** becoming angry that his undertaking had resulted in such a misfortune, **because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah,** by inflicting this stroke; **and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah** (the breach of Uzzah) **to this day.** V. 9. **And David was afraid of the Lord that day,** the anger over his misfortune gradually turned to apprehension and then to fear, as he considered that his disregard of the Lord's command about transporting the ark had evidently been the cause of the unfortunate happening, and said, **How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?** David felt that he was guilty before the Lord and unworthy of His presence. V. 10. **So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David,** fearing that misfortune might strike his entire family if he proceeded with his plan; **but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite,** who hailed from Gath-Rimmon, the Levitical city in Dan, a musician and also a porter at the Sanctuary in Jerusalem. V. 11. **And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite, three months; and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.** To the believers of the New Testament the most holy thing is God's Word and Sacrament, for where the means of grace are administered, there the Triune God dwells. To the believing Christians the Word of God is a savor of life unto life, but to those who despise His grace it is a savor of death unto death.

The Second Attempt Successful. — V. 12. **And it was told King David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.** So the mere presence of the ark did not bring misfortune, as David had feared. All depended, rather, upon one's attitude toward the Lord, whether that was one of rash presumption or of humble faith. **So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David,** where he had prepared a place and pitched a tent for it, 1 Chron. 15, 1, **with gladness,** with festival joy, in solemn procession. V. 13. **And it was so that, when they that bare the ark of the Lord,** for David did not repeat his first mistake of transporting it on a cart, **had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings,** literally, "he caused to be sacrificed an ox and a fat calf," in order to consecrate the procession, which had started so auspiciously. V. 14. **And David,** when the procession moved on, **danced before the Lord with all his might,** in an ecstasy of holy joy; **and David was girded with a linen ephod,** a copy of those worn by the priests, for David, as the head of a nation of priests, wore this garment in honor of Jehovah. V. 15. **So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting,** amid the joyful acclamation of the people, **and with the sound of the trumpet,** used on all festive occasions. V. 16. **And as the ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter,** showing the characteristics of her father rather than those of her husband, **looked through a window,** for she had probably disdained to mingle with the common people, **and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord,** placing himself on a level with the multitude; **and she despised him in her heart,** considering his behavior unseemly and unbecoming his royal dignity. V. 17. **And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place,** in a space marked off as particularly holy, **in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it,** a large tent with costly curtains. **And David offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord,** preparing for the sacrificial meal which was then celebrated. V. 18. **And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts,** not with the blessing of Aaron, which pertained to the priests only, but in an address in which he called down upon them the bless-

ings of Jehovah. V. 19. **And, after the ceremony of dedication, he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread,** like those baked for sacrificial meals, Ex. 29, 23; Lev. 8, 24. 25, **and a good piece of flesh,** either a slab of bread or a measure of wine, the word in the original meaning "measure," **and a flagon of wine,** a cake of pressed raisins. **So all the people departed every one to his house,** at the completion of the festival meal. V. 20. **Then David,** still filled with elation over the success of his undertaking, **returned to bless his household,** as he had blessed the entire assembly. **And Michal, the daughter of Saul,** still under the influence of her feeling of disgust, **came out to meet David and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day,** emphasizing his title in bitter irony, **who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants,** degrading himself by exchanging his long royal garments for the light and comparatively short priestly dress, **as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!** She accused him of forgetting his royal dignity and acting the buffoon, the common street-dancer. V. 21. **And David said unto Michal,** in a gentle, but very effective reproof of her pride, **It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father and before all his house,** the sons who might have been his successors, **to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel.** Saul had been rejected by God on account of his pride, and here the same ugly trait showed in his daughter. But David had been placed ahead of Saul and his own family, hence he adds: **Therefore will I play before the Lord,** willing to abase himself in the presence of Jehovah. V. 22. **And I will yet be more vile than thus,** ready to bear still greater contempt on the part of men, **and will be base in mine own sight; and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honor,** fully satisfied with the homage given him by the lowest in the nation. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. V. 23. **Therefore,** because she had exhibited such unwarranted pride, **Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death,** one of the severest punishments known in the Old Testament. Like David and the children of Israel, the believers rejoice in the Lord and in His Word and gladly sing praises to Him, nor will they be deterred by the contempt of the world.

CHAPTER 7.

The Promise of the Messiah.

THE NEWS ANNOUNCED TO DAVID. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house,** an expression referring to his permanent abode after having attended to all the external affairs of the kingdom, **and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies,** all those nations which still felt strong enough to dispute the growing power of Israel having been vanquished, v. 2. **that the king said unto Nathan, the prophet,** whom he regarded highly as a confidential adviser, **See, now, I dwell in an house of cedar, in a fine palace, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.** Even though David had provided a tabernacle in his city which consisted of very fine and costly curtains, like those of the first Tabernacle, yet the contrast was too obvious and too incongruous; it did not seem right and fitting to David that he should have a finer palace than that used for housing the ark. V. 3. **And Nathan,** understanding the suggestion of the king and approving his intention, **said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart, all that** David had resolved upon; **for the Lord is with thee.** This approval of David's purpose, however, came out of Nathan's own mind, not by divine revelation. V. 4. **And it came to pass that night that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying,** v. 5. **Go and tell My servant David,** an honoring designation for the king, **Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build Me an house for Me to dwell in?** The question implies, of course, a very decided denial of his request, a rejection of his proposal to build a temple. V. 6. **Whereas I have not dwelt in any house,** any permanent building, **since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle,** literally, "I was a wanderer in tent and dwelling-place"; for even after the children of Israel had reached Canaan, the tent had been moved from Gilgal to Shiloh, and then to the hill between Gibeah and Gibeon. The Tabernacle, the structure as built by Moses, Ex. 35, 11, had been Jehovah's dwelling-place. V. 7. **In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people Israel, saying, Why build ye not Me an house of cedar?** Neither during the desert journey, nor during the entire period of the Judges, when the leadership passed from one tribe of the more important ones to another, had the Lord ever commanded the children of Israel to build Him a permanent and costly sanctuary, worthy of His glory. V. 8. **Now, therefore, so shalt thou say unto My servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts,** Jehovah Sabaoth,

the King of the whole earth, **I took thee from the sheepcote,** from the meadows where the sheep were pastured, **from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.** That was an act of God's merciful favor. V. 9. **And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest,** David had always been sure of the merciful presence of Jehovah, even during the years when Saul persecuted him, **and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight,** from before thy face, **and have made thee a great name like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth;** for David's victories had brought him into prominent attention in all the surrounding nations. Of so much concerning his outward success Nathan was to remind David first, of the fact that he owed his position and all his success to the Lord alone. V. 10. **Moreover, I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them,** rather, "I have established and I have planted," **that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more,** not be troubled, distressed, and driven from one place to another; **neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime,** in the time of the Egyptian oppression, v. 11. **and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies.** The former days of slavery and tribulation were to return no more. Those were the blessings which the Lord had provided for the people as such. And now comes the most wonderful promise of all, one affecting both king and people to the most remote descendants. **Also the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house,** literally, "And there announces to thee Jehovah that a house will make to thee Jehovah," a very solemn announcement preparing for the prophecy proper. V. 12. **And when thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers,** after David would have been laid to rest in the hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, **I will set up thy Seed after thee,** one of David's descendants, **which shall proceed out of thy bowels,** as a true descendant according to the flesh, **and I will establish His kingdom,** confirm the royal office in His case. V. 13. **He shall build an house for My name,** to the name of Jehovah, **and I will stablish the throne of His kingdom forever.** The descendant of David to whom this prophecy looked forward was to be confirmed in regal honor and dignity in a most singular way, in a kingdom which would have everlasting duration. His building of a house to Jehovah, moreover, would be the same as that of Jehovah making a house to Himself, v. 11. The two statements refer to the same event. The relation between Jehovah and this singular descendant of David is now described in detail. V. 14. **I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son. If He commit iniquity,** literally, "whom, if He transgresses," **I will chasten Him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men.** That this is not spoken of Solomon, as most modern commentators will have it, may be seen from the fact that Solomon was a mere man, and there would have been nothing unusual in his being punished for any transgressions after the manner of men. This singular descendant of David, if found guilty of the sins of men, the implication being that the latter would be imputed to Him, would have to bear the penalty of a sinner. V. 15. **But My mercy shall not depart away from Him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee,** "from before thy face." The descendant of David to whom the Lord refers would not experience the rejection which struck Saul, because He would not become guilty of such disobedience to Jehovah. V. 16. **And thine house and thy kingdom,** the royal power in lineal descendants of David, **shall be established forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever.** The constant repetition of the phrase "forever, for eternity," again forces the conclusion that we must look beyond Solomon, to the eternal existence of the Son here concerned, to One who is Himself possessor of eternal life and of a kingdom which shall never have an end. This, of course, may rightly be said only of Christ, for it was in His case alone that there was so complete an identification with the sons of men as to make the expression possible: "He was made sin for us," 2 Cor. 5, 21. V. 17. **According to all these words and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.** The temple here spoken of is that of the Christian Church, the communion of saints, which is the habitation of God in the Spirit. Christ is the Lord, and the believers cling to this Head in the Kingdom which shall last through all eternity.

David's Prayer of Thanksgiving. — V. 18. **Then went King David in and sat before the Lord,** he spent some time in the tent where the ark of the Lord's presence was; for it took him a long while to become familiar with the miraculous contents of the message announced to him; **and he said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house,** his entire family, **that thou hast brought me hitherto?** He humbly acknowledged that all the blessings and benefits bestowed upon him by the Lord were expressions of His free love and mercy. V. 19. **And this,** the wonderful external favors, **was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?** literally, "And this is the law of the man, namely, Lord Jehovah." David not only understood that the Messianic prophecy was given to his family,

that the eternal establishment of his house and kingdom, in the person of Messiah, was included in the prophecy which had come to him, but it was also clear to him that this singular descendant would, in His person, combine two natures, the human and the divine. Messiah, the true man, would at the same time be the Lord Jehovah. V. 20. **And what can David say more unto Thee?** Human language is inadequate to convey the gratitude which filled his heart. **For Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant.** V. 21. **For Thy word's sake,** the promise transmitted to him by Nathan, **and according to Thine own heart,** out of free grace and mercy, **hast thou done all these great things,** for David even now considered the promises fulfilled, **to make Thy servant know them.** V. 22. **Wherefore Thou art great, O Lord God,** in the revelation of His grace toward all mankind; **for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears,** namely, of the great deeds whereby in the past God had revealed Himself to His people as such a God. V. 23. **And what one nation in the earth is like Thy people, even like Israel,** an emphatic statement of the singular position Israel enjoyed in the grace of Jehovah, **whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for Thy land, before Thy people, which Thou redeemedst to Thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?** It is a short review of all the great and mighty wonders with which God had visited His people since He had chosen them for His own, down to the time when He had driven out the heathen of Canaan and their idols before Israel's victorious armies. V. 24. **For Thou hast confirmed to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee forever; and Thou, Lord, art become their God.** The Lord's free grace had been the source of the covenant which existed, and Israel's obedience was the condition of the continuance of this relation. V. 25. **And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant,** the special Messianic promise, **and concerning his house, establish it forever, as Thou hast said,** so that it would truly be fulfilled. V. 26. **And let Thy name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel,** the almighty God, who rules heaven and earth, is the Defender and Protector of Israel. **And let the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee.** V. 27. **For Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant,** literally, "hast uncovered the ear," by the announcement of Nathan, saying, **I will build Thee an house; therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart,** gained the courage, **to pray this prayer unto Thee;** for out of the fulness of the heart his mouth spoke. V. 28. **And now, O Lord God, Thou art that God,** the one true God, **and Thy words be true, and Thou hast promised this goodness unto Thy servant.** V. 29. **Therefore, now, let it please Thee to bless,** rather, begin to bless, **the house of Thy servant, that it may continue forever before Thee;** having determined upon His course, the Lord is begged to set Himself to the fulfilment of His promise, to take it in hand speedily; **for Thou, O Lord, hast spoken it, and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed forever.** David completes his prayer of thanksgiving by expressing his confident hope, his firm trust, that the word of the Lord will certainly come to pass. True faith clings to the promises of God and applies them to ourselves.

CHAPTER 8.

David's Wars and Victories.

VICTORIES OVER VARIOUS NATIONS. — V. 1. **And after this it came to pass that David smote the Philistines and subdued them,** brought them completely into his power. **And David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines,** literally, "the bridle of the mother," of the chief city, the figurative saying being understood of the complete yielding to the control of another. V. 2. **And he smote Moab,** east and southeast of the Dead Sea, **and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive.** It was a very severe punishment which was here meted out to the Moabites, since their soldiers were compelled to lie down on the ground, two-thirds of them being measured for death and one-third for life. **And so the Moabites,** with only a third of their warriors remaining, **became David's servants and brought gifts,** that is, paid tribute-money. V. 3. **David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah,** a district of Syria, **as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates;** for Saul had already successfully fought against this nation, 1 Sam. 14, 47. When Hadadezer attempted to recover his shattered power on the Euphrates, David completed the work begun by Saul and brought the entire territory into subjection to him. V. 4. **And David took from him a thousand chariots and seven hundred horsemen** (some read seven thousand, 1 Chron. 18, 4) **and twenty thousand footmen. And David houghed all the chariot horses,** by cutting the sinews of their hind feet, **but reserved of them for an hun-**

dred chariots, probably to display them in a triumphal procession or for the use of his guard. V. 5. **And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians,** or, Arameans, **two and twenty thousand men.** V. 6. **Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus,** in the country of the Arameans, whose capital was Damascus, a city still situated in its ancient location on the Pharpar River and on the great caravan route between Central Asia and the Mediterranean; **and the Syrians became servants to David,** tributary to Israel, **and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went;** his success was due entirely to the blessing of Jehovah. V. 7. **And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer,** for the officers of this king could afford such costly weapons, **and brought them to Jerusalem,** as a part of the rich booty made in this war. V. 8. **And from Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took exceeding much brass,** for it seems that there were very productive copper-mines in this part of Syria. Note: If a believer undertakes his work in the fear of God and to His glory, the Lord will grant His blessing according to His promise.

David's Prestige Recognized. — V. 9. **When Toi, king of Hamath,** a district of Syria on the Orontes River, **heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,** v. 10. **then Toi sent Joram, his son** (also known as Hadoram), **unto King David, to salute him,** with the usual greetings of peace, **and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and smitten him; for Hadadezer had wars with Toi,** he had been waging continual war with Toi with the purpose of subduing his land. David's victory had freed him from a dangerous enemy, and therefore Toi wisely sought an alliance with the powerful victor. **And Joram brought with him vessels of silver and vessels of gold and vessels of brass,** gifts almost like those of a tributary king, v. 11. **which also,** like the metal brought as booty from the Syrian war, **King David did dedicate unto the Lord,** placing them into the treasury of the Tabernacle, **with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued,** including the Ammonites, the Amalekites, and the Edomites; v. 12. **of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.** V. 13. **And David gat him a name,** he gained renown, his fame spread far and wide, **when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the Valley of Salt, being eighteen thousand men,** namely, of the Edomites. It seems that the children of Edom took the opportunity offered by David's absence in the Syrian country to make an attack on Southern Canaan. They had advanced to the Southern end of the Dead Sea when the army of David, just back from the Syrian war, fell upon them with such disastrous results. V. 14. **And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons,** the character of the country demanding such a complete garrisoning, **and all they of Edom became David's servants,** tributary vassals. **And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went;** it was due to God's protection, to His blessing, that David was so successful in his campaign. V. 15. **And David reigned over all Israel,** the reunited nation. **And David,** taking advantage of the peaceful conditions following the conquest of the various nations, **executed judgment and justice unto all his people;** he built up his influence among his own people by a wise and just rule, ordering and administering the affairs of the nation with great care. V. 16. **And Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was over the host,** had supreme command of the army; **and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was recorder,** chronicler and preserver of the most important happenings in the kingdom; v. 17. **and Zadok, the son of Ahitub,** of the line of Eleazar, Aaron's son, **and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar,** of the line of Eli, **were the priests,** that is, the high priests, one probably officiating at the Tabernacle on the heights of Gibeon, 1 Chron. 16, 39, the other in the tent at Jerusalem; **and Seraiah was the scribe,** secretary of state; v. 18. **and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites,** the king's body-guard, who not only carried out the royal orders, but also executed the royal death sentences, being executioners and runners; **and David's sons were chief rulers,** serving as confidential counselors. Like David, all believers labor and battle during their whole life for the honor of the Lord, serve Him with body and soul, and willingly sacrifice of the blessing which the Lord has given them.

CHAPTER 9.

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth.

David Receives Mephibosheth Graciously. V. 1. **And David said,** at the time when his victories had given him comparative peace for the time being, **Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul,** any descendant of his, any member of his family, **that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?** The word here used applies to such kindness as the Lord shows, which is an outflow of the kindness and love of God living in the hearts of the believers. His question implies the

answer: There certainly must be some relative living, in whose case I may fulfil my promise to Jonathan, 1 Sam. 20, 14. 15. V. 2. **And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba,** probably known to some of David's men and hunted up by them for the purpose of obtaining the information required by the king. **And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.** V. 3. **And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?** David felt under obligations that, as he had received the mercy of the Lord, so he would pass on its kindness even to the descendants of the man who had pursued him for years. **And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet,** chap. 4, 4. V. 4. **And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.** Machir evidently was a well-to-do and influential man, living on the east side of Jordan, near Mahanaim and Rabboth-Ammon, who had offered his house as a place of refuge to the poor cripple. V. 5. **Then King David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.** He lost no time in fulfilling his promise and in showing mercy, for postponing a good work is often equivalent to abandoning it altogether. V. 6. **Now, when Mephibosheth** (or, Meribbaal, 1 Chron. 8, 34), **the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence,** acknowledging him as king with tokens of fear. **And David said, Mephibosheth! And he answered, Behold thy servant!** V. 7. **And David said unto him, Fear not,** he was to have no apprehension of losing his life, according to the custom of Oriental monarchs of putting all the members of the former dynasty to death; **for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan, thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father,** which had either passed into the possession of the crown or into that of remote kinsmen of Saul; **and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually,** receive his sustenance from the king's bounty. This threefold promise was intended fully to reassure Mephibosheth, whose great misfortunes, the loss of his parents, his lameness, and his poverty, cast a shadow upon his whole life. V. 8. **And he,** Mephibosheth, **bowed himself,** in grateful appreciation of the king's kindness, **and said,** with words wherein he confessed himself unworthy of such great goodness, **what is thy servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?** The comparison, as in 1 Sam. 24, 14, is intended to convey the feeling of utter worthlessness, of despicable lowliness. David's forbearance and love, the eager zeal with which he entered upon the performance of good works, are an example to all believers.

DAVID GIVES ORDERS FOR MEPHIBOSHETH'S CARE. — V. 9. **Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant,** who may have resided upon the property of the family of Saul at Gibeah as steward, **and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house,** thereby giving him all the rights of the sole heir. V. 10. **Thou, therefore, and thy sons and thy servants shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits,** have entire charge of the farm-lands and be responsible for the crop, **that thy master's son may have food to eat, that his house or family might be taken care of; but Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table,** he personally was to have this honor of dining daily at the king's table. **Now, Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants,** he was therefore in a position to manage so large an estate as that hereby transferred to Mephibosheth. V. 11. **Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table as one of the king's sons.** Ziba repeated the exact words of the king, to show his full agreement and ready obedience. He thought it expedient to show himself as tractable as possible, in order to get into David's good graces. V. 12. **And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha,** 1 Chron. 8, 34. **And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth,** they took care of the estate at Gibeah, according to David's orders. V. 13. **So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table,** as David had arranged, a companion of the royal family in the house and at the table; **and was lame on both his feet.** David's manner of acting was noble, truly royal in showing such kindness to Mephibosheth, a type of the loving-kindness and tender mercies of his great descendant, Jesus Christ, in His care for all those who are poor, miserable, and heavy laden.

CHAPTER 10.

The Syro-Ammonite War.

David's Servants Shamefully Treated. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after this that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 2. **Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me.** Nahash had been defeated by Saul at Jabesh, 1 Sam. 11, but had maintained a friendly attitude toward David, probably also by rendering him some form of assistance during the years of his persecution. **And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father,** he dispatched an embassy to express his sympathy at the bereavement of Hanun. **And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon,** as David supposed, to a nation friendly to Israel under his reign. V. 3. **And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun, their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father,** literally, "Is David in thine eyes an honorer of thy father," **that he hath sent comforters unto thee? Hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?** The suggestion that the messengers of David were spies was made with the purpose of causing Hanun to adopt a hostile attitude toward David which would be a challenge to war, for the Ammonites now felt themselves strong enough again to try conclusions with Israel. V. 4. **Wherefore Hanun,** listening to the counsel of his princes, especially as this implied a criticism of his carelessness, **took David's servants and shaved off the one half of their beards,** the one side, one of the grossest insults that can be offered an Oriental, who considers his beard the sign of manly dignity and freedom, **and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks,** thus exposing them before the eyes of all men, **and sent them away,** heaped with this double insult and disgrace. V. 5. **When they told it unto David,** when the news of this shameful treatment came to him, **he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed,** disgrace had been heaped upon them; **and the king said, Tarry at Jericho,** the district where that city had formerly stood, **until your beards be grown, and then return.** He himself did not want to witness their shame. To seek occasion for wars, to provoke quarrels, is a great wrong, which has often been punished by the Lord with great severity.

The First Defeat of the Enemies. — V. 6. **And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David,** that they had become hateful to him 1 Sam. 13, 4, **the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba,** chap. 8, 3. 5, **twenty thousand footmen, and of King Maacah,** on the northern border of Bashan, **a thousand men, and of Ish-tob,** of the men of Tob, a district east or northeast of the Ammonite territory, **twelve thousand men.** It was a mighty army of infantry, cavalry, and war-chariots. V. 7. **And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men,** literally, "the whole host, the mighty men," the veterans of the many wars in which David had engaged. V. 8. **And the children of Ammon came out,** namely, from the strong fortifications of their capital city, **and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate,** they formed their battle-front immediately before the city; **and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah,** their auxiliaries or allies, **were by themselves in the field,** in the broad Plain of Medeba, the two armies preferring to maneuver separately. V. 9. **When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind,** that he could be attacked by the Syrians in the front, by the Ammonites in the rear, **he chose of all the choice men of Israel,** the best men of his veteran army, **and put them in array against the Syrians,** whom he evidently considered the more dangerous enemies; v. 10. **and the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai, his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.** Thus Joab was covered in his rear when he attacked the Syrians and might have support if he needed it. V. 11. **And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me,** for he intended to attack and defeat the Syrians first, **then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.** All depended upon the quickness and the force of the double blow as Joab had planned it. V. 12. **Be of good courage,** Abishai himself should be of a fearless temper of mind, **and let us play the men for our people,** true leaders in warlike action, **and for the cities of our God,** for the cities of Israel, for which they were contending, were really the gift of God to His people; **and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good.** "These words express trust in God combined with unconditional submission." V. 13. **And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians,** in a quick and vigorous attack against their well-disciplined forces; **and they fled before him,** their lines broke at the first onslaught. V. 14. **And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city,** they retired into their fortifications. **So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and**

came to Jerusalem. His was a brilliant exploit, but not a decisive defeat of the Syrians. The siege of Rabbah he did not undertake, either because the season was too far advanced, or because he did not have the materials for such a siege. Both Joab and Abishai, trusting in the God of Israel, had done their duty, for a just war may well be carried on by believers.

THE FINAL DEFEAT OF THE SYRIANS. — V. 15. **And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel,** in the battle near Rabbah, **they gathered themselves together,** anxious to wipe out the disgrace of their defeat. V. 16. **And Hadarezer,** the mightiest Syrian king, **sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river,** in Mesopotamia; **and they came to Helam,** in the neighborhood of Hamath; **and Shobach, the captain of the host of Hadarezer, went before them.** V. 17. **And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together,** all the men that were trained for warfare, **and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam.** The importance which David attached to this campaign is seen from the fact that he took command in person, for he had lost none of his military ability. **And the Syrians set themselves in array against David and fought with him.** V. 18. **And the Syrians fled before Israel,** unable to withstand the fury of their attack; **and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach, the captain of their host, who died there,** he was so severely wounded that he did not survive the battle. V. 19. **And when all the kings that were servants,** vassals, **to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them,** became tributary to them together with their former lord. **So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.** "Nothing is here said of the wars with Damascus and Edom, to which Joab turned in the south, while David was gaining his victories in the north, because the narrative is here occupied with the fortunes of Rabbah only because of their connection with those of Uriah." (Lange.) Thus Jehovah crowns the work, the battle of those who trust in Him with His blessing and good fortune. The Ammonites experienced what many others have since found out, namely, that those who begin a war without cause will in the end have the greatest misfortune on account of their crime.

CHAPTER 11.

David's Double Transgression.

DAVID'S ADULTERY. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, after the year was expired,** literally, "at the return of the year," when spring set in, when the close of the rainy season made operations in the field possible, **at the time when kings go forth to battle,** starting out for the season's campaigns, **that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel,** the military chieftains with the entire regular army; **and they destroyed the children of Ammon,** overthrowing their smaller cities, devastating their land, and putting the inhabitants to death, **and besieged Rabbah,** the capital, which was strongly fortified. **But David,** instead of joining his army in the field, **tarried still at Jerusalem,** this life of comparative ease offering the occasion for the transgression; for, as the proverb has it: An idle brain is the devil's workshop. V. 2. **And it came to pass in an eveningtide that David arose from off his bed,** after the noonday siesta, when the cool of the evening invited people outside, **and walked upon the roof of the king's house,** which was flat and parapeted, like all the houses of the Orient; **and from the roof,** which offered an all the wider view, since it was on Mount Zion, **he saw a woman washing herself,** taking a bath in the uncovered court of her house; **and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.** There is a warning here to every woman against intentional or unintentional exposure, whether at bathing-beaches, in street-dress, or about the house. V. 3. **And David,** inflamed with sensual desire, **sent and enquired after the woman,** made inquiry concerning her person and family relation. **And one said, Is not this Bathsheba** (or Bathshuah, 1 Chron. 3, 5), **the daughter of Eliam,** also known as Ammiel, **the wife of Uriah, the Hittite?** Uriah was one of the heroes in David's army, being at that time in the field with Joab. V. 4. **And David sent messengers and took her,** Bathsheba evidently coming and submitting to his demands without opposition. **And she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness,** literally, "and she cleansed herself from her defilement," this being demanded by the Law, Lev. 15, 18; **and she returned unto her house.** The great sin of adultery she had committed without serious thought, but the act of purification she religiously observed, just as many people living in open transgressions of God's holy Law believe they may salve their consciences by small acts of charity. V. 5. **And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.** This message was sent with the object of having David find some means of avoiding the consequences of their mutual sin, since, according to the Law, Lev. 20, 10, both of the guilty ones should die. V. 6. **And David,** acting upon Bathsheba's hint, **sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah, the**

Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. V. 7. **And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.** Uriah, as one of Joab's officers, could easily give this information. The entire move, of course, was merely a blind, as the sequel shows. V. 8. **And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house and wash thy feet.** It was, apparently, a gracious dismissal, with the suggestion that Uriah should take his rest and refreshment at home. The object was, of course, that Uriah, having been at his house, might pass for the father of the child begotten in adultery. **And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.** The present was probably a dish of honor, Esther 2, 18, which he was to enjoy at home, a second inducement to have him visit his house. V. 9. **But Uriah,** whether his suspicions had been aroused or not, **slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord,** in the guard-room with the royal court officials, **and went not down to his house.** V. 10. **And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah,** with a displeasure caused by his growing uneasiness over the frustration of his plans, **Camest thou not from thy journey? Why, then, didst thou not go down unto thine house?** The conduct of Uriah was strange, and not at all in conformity with the manner of the average person. V. 11. **And Uriah said unto David, The ark and Israel and Judah abide in tents,** in camp before Rabbah; **and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields,** without the comforts of home, lying on the bare ground; **shall I, then, go into mine house to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.** It was a solemn explanation and asseveration declaring his inability to meet the king's wishes at this time, under these conditions. V. 12. **And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart.** He wanted to try once more to gain his object of having Uriah return to his house. **So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow,** waiting to be dismissed to the army. V. 13. **And when David had called him,** invited him to partake of a meal at his own table, **he did eat and drink before him; and he,** David, **made him drunk,** hoping that in this condition he would surely pass the night with his wife; **and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.** Even in his befuddled condition his sense of duty or his suspicion of the king's plan kept him from spending the night at home. David's example shows how a person who has fallen into sin will try to hide his disgrace from the eyes of men. God and His will are disregarded entirely. But it is impossible to remove the consequences of sin in this manner, as David was to find out.

David's Murder of Uriah. — V. 14. **And it came to pass in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.** His first plan having failed, his sin-darkened heart now made ready to add murder to adultery. V. 15. **And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle,** opposite the place where the most bitter attack might be expected, **and retire ye from him,** falling away from behind him while he was busily engaged in warding off the blows of the attacking enemies, **that he may be smitten and die.** His own bravery being of a kind to be relied upon at all times, and his retreat cut off, the supposition was that Uriah would surely fall. V. 16. **And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city,** literally, "watched, found out the place where the fiercest sallies might be expected, **"that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were,** namely, on the part of the enemy. V. 17. **And the men of the city,** accepting the challenge, **went out and fought with Joab; and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah, the Hittite, died also.** Thus Joab carried out the command of the king in permitting a man to be killed whose seemingly accidental death was desired for some special reason. V. 18. **Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war,** with a report of this special engagement; v. 19. **and charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,** the general circumstantial report, v. 20. **and if so be that the kings wrath arise and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? Knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?** Joab felt that such a real or simulated outburst of anger on the part of the king might be expected. V. 21. **Who smote Abimelech, the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall that he died in Thebez?** Cp. Judg. 6, 32; 9, 53. **Why went ye nigh the wall? Then say thou, Thy servant Uriah, the Hittite, is dead also.** Joab was sure that this information would have the desired effect in taking away the king's anger. V. 22. **So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for,** his report being even briefer than that outlined by Joab. V. 23. **And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us,** proved too mighty at the point of attack, **and came out unto us into the field,** in a sharp

sally, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate, in repulsing the sally. V. 24. **And the shooters**, the archers stationed on the ramparts, **shot from off the wall upon thy servants**, as they pressed so near the gate; **and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah, the Hittite, is dead also.** V. 25. **Then David said unto the messenger**, apparently with the quiet of a commander whom such evil news could not disturb in his equanimity and in his certainty of eventual victory, **Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another**, literally, "so and so devours the sword," that is the fortune of war; **make thy battle more strong against the city and overthrow it**, the siege should be pressed until the city was taken; **and encourage thou him**, for the messenger evidently himself was one of the officers in the army. He indicated his confidence that the courage and ability of the soldiers of Joab would surely bring the campaign to a successful close. V. 26. **And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah, her husband, was dead, she mourned for her husband**, probably the usual seven days, Gen. 50, 10; 1 Sam. 31, 13. V. 27. **And when the mourning was past, David**, still with the same passionate desire for the woman as before, **sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son**, the child begotten in adultery. The two guilty ones wanted it to appear that the interval between their marriage and the birth of Bathsheba's child was long enough to make its birth in wedlock seem possible, an evil plan still resorted to by fornicators or adulterers to hide their sin. **But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.** He took note of the transgression and prepared to punish it in due time. Sins of adultery and murder are of a nature to take faith out of the hearts of the believers and to make them children of wrath and damnation.

CHAPTER 12.

David's Repentance.

NATHAN'S REPROOF AND ITS SUCCESS. — V. 1. **And the Lord**, almost a year after the first transgression, **sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him and said unto him, There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.** Nathan chose the parable in order to bring home his reproof with all the greater force. V. 2. **The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds**, he is purposely represented as possessing all that his heart might desire; v. 3. **but the poor man had nothing**, literally, "nothing at all," **save one little ewe lamb**, the only property which his slender means allowed, **which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat**, since he shared even his last morsel with it, **and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom**, carefully tended and shielded against all harm and danger, **and was unto him as a daughter.** Note that all the circumstances are pictured in such a manner as to heighten both the pity and the indignation of the hearer. V. 4. **And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he**, the latter, **spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but, in an excess** of base selfishness, **took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him.** V. 5. **And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, as Nathan had intended for the sake of the effective application of his parable; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die**, literally, "is a son of death," since his robbery of the one ewe lamb was almost like that of a human being; v. 6. **and he shall restore the lamb fourfold**, as the Law required, Ex. 21, 37, **because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.** The parable had been so chosen that David could have no idea of its application to his own crime against Uriah. V. 7. **And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.** The accusation came with all the greater force since David was not aware of the fact that he himself was concerned. The wisdom, tact, and firmness with which Nathan approached the king are truly admirable. **Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel**, therefore his crime had been one against the royal office, **and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul**, an act of divine kindness and grace; v. 8. **and I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom**, both the property and the harem of the king being legally given into the hands of his successor, although it does not follow that David actually married Saul's wife, **and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah**; the entire nation had promised him allegiance, and he might have had his choice of the virgins of the country; **and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things**; His bountiful goodness was not yet exhausted. V. 9. **Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord**, literally, "the word," that is, the law, of God, **to do evil in His sight, in this** double transgression? **Thou hast killed Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword**, in fact, though not in person, **and hast taken his**

wife to be thy wife, she who still should have been Uriah's wife now lived in a guilty marriage with David, **and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon,** according to a well-laid plan. V. 10. **Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house,** its bloodiness being evident in the murder of Amnon, the death of Absalom, and the execution of Adonijah; **because thou hast despised Me,** since he who despises God's Word despises Him, **and hast taken the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, to be thy wife.** This was the first punishment. But more was to come. V. 11. **Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house,** as a punishment for the sin of adultery, **and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives,** in open, incestuous intercourse, **in the sight of this sun.** V. 12. **For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun,** in broad daylight, in flagrant shamelessness. Cp. chap. 16, 22. V. 13. **And David said unto Nathan,** in full acknowledgment of his sin, without the slightest attempt at excusing himself or depreciating the sin, **I have sinned against the Lord,** His confession is given in only a few words, but the feelings of his heart are expressed in Psalm 51. **And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin,** literally, "has caused thy sin to pass over," not to remain before Him, to vanish, to be forgiven; **thou shalt not die,** the punishment which his sin properly merited. V. 14. **Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,** to despise the God of Israel for permitting such sins to be committed, for so they would construe the matter, **the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die,** the fruit of the adulterous union would be destroyed, to show the severity of God's justice upon the transgressors of His Law. God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but wants him to repent and live. Even those who have fallen into serious sins the Lord seeks with His Word and Spirit and admonishes them to repent. Note that the purpose of every reproof of sins is to move the heart and conscience of sinners, to cause them to forsake their transgressions, and to turn to the mercy and grace of God.

THE DEATH OF DAVID'S CHILD. — V. 15. **And Nathan, having delivered the sentence of the Lord, departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David,** the phrasing once more calling attention to the sin, **and it was very sick.** The sickness in this case was a direct punishment of God upon the parents. V. 16. **David, therefore, besought God for the child,** to spare its life; **and David fasted,** as a sign of deep sorrow and repentance, **and went in,** to a quiet room or retired spot of his house, **and lay all night upon the earth.** He bowed in meekness under the punishing hand of God, but also pleaded for merciful consideration, if he might expect such. V. 17. **And the elders of his house,** his oldest and most confidential servants, **arose and went to him to raise him up from the earth; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.** His grief was too great to yield to their appeals and admonitions. V. 18. **And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died,** God had deemed it best to carry out the punishment decided upon. **And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; how will he, then, vex himself,** by being plunged into still deeper grief, in which he might do himself harm, **if we tell him that the child is dead?** V. 19. **But when David saw that his servants whispered,** not daring to approach him with the sad news, **David perceived that the child was dead,** he drew his conclusions from their behavior; **therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.** V. 20. **Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord,** the tent where the Ark of the Covenant had been placed, **and worshiped,** his humble yielding to God's chastening hand enabling him joyfully to bear the burden laid upon him. **Then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.** V. 21. **Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done?** They could not explain David's conduct to themselves. **Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.** V. 22. **And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said,** he thought in his heart, **Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live?** If God had spared his child, David would have regarded the fact as a proof of God's special mercy upon him. V. 23. **But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again?** He humbled himself under the mighty hand of God without giving way to fruitless grief. **I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,** a clear confession of the belief in a life after death. V. 24. **And David comforted Bathsheba, his wife,** with the same comfort which he himself had received, **and went in unto her and lay with her; and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon,** undoubtedly with the prayer that God might grant him peace in every way. **And the Lord loved him, gave the child**

special evidences of His loving-kindness. V. 25. **And He**, the Lord, **sent by the hand of Nathan, the prophet**, as His official representative in this case; **and he called his name Jedidiah** (beloved of the Lord), **because of the Lord.** All this points forward to the object of Christ's coming in the flesh. For He is come to cover over our nakedness and disgrace before God, to change the scarlet color of our guilt into the white of perfect innocence, through the atonement gained by His blood.

SUCCESS AGAINST THE AMMONITES. — V. 26. **And Joab**, in the second year of the campaign, **fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city**, the city proper, without the citadel. V. 27. **And Joab sent messengers to David and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters**, for it lay on both banks of the Upper Jabbok, in a narrow valley beneath its fort or acropolis. V. 28. **Now, therefore, gather the rest of the people together**, mustering all those able to bear arms, **and encamp against the city**, the citadel on the heights, **and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name.** Joab here acted either as a devoted servant of David, who honestly wished him to have all the honor in the campaign, or as a shrewd politician, who would run no risks by gaining extraordinary successes. V. 29. **And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it**, he conquered the strong acropolis. V. 30. **And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones** (about one hundred pounds avoirdupois); **and it was set on David's head**, at least during the coronation ceremonies, which proclaimed him lord of the Ammonite kingdom. **And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.** V. 31. **And he brought forth the people that were therein**, in the acropolis, **and put them under saws**, putting them to death by sawing them apart, **and under harrows**, instruments or axes, **of iron, and under axes of iron**, knives or other cutting instruments, **and made them pass through the brick-kiln**, the place where they burned their children to their idol Moloch; **and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon.** The purpose was to inflict a striking punishment upon idolatry, for the war was a holy war. **So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.** This great victory was another proof of God's grace and favor, for He is kind and gracious, and abundant in mercy and truth, forgiving iniquities, and transgressions, and sins.

CHAPTER 13.

Amnon's Incest and Its Punishment.

AMNON'S CRIME. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after this that Absalom, the son of David**, chap. 3, 3, **had a fair sister**, a full sister to him, who was a very beautiful young woman, **whose name was Tamar; and Amnon, the son of David**, her half-brother by another of David's wives, **loved her.** V. 2. **And Amnon was so vexed**, his passion preyed on him to such an extent, **that he fell sick for his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her**, literally, "it was difficult to accomplish in the eyes of Amnon," he found it impossible to gratify his passion because of Tamar's maidenly reserve and her inaccessibility in the harem. V. 3. **But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother**, his own cousin; **and Jonadab was a very subtile man**, known for his craftiness. V. 4. **And he said unto him, Why art thou**, being the king's son, in whose case there was no apparent reason for such a condition, **lean from day to day?** He looked more wretched from one morning to the next, since his nights were made sleepless by his torturing passion. **Wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.** V. 5. **And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed and make thyself sick**, feigning illness; **and when thy father cometh to see thee**, to visit the son who had been reported sick, **say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come and give me meat**, prepare food, **and dress the meat in my sight**, make ready some special dish for the sick, **that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.** He intimated that the sight of the food in such circumstances would give him an appetite. Evidently every wife of the king with her children occupied her own apartments in the royal palace, but the intercourse between the children was fairly free. V. 6. **So Amnon**, following the advice of his shrewd cousin with all that it implied, **lay down and made himself sick; and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar, my sister**, whose skill in cooking was evidently well known, **come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight**, two heart-cakes, made of rolled dough, something on the order of pancakes, considered very strengthening for the heart, **that I may eat at her hand.** V. 7. **Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house**, who apparently occupied apartments of his own, **and dress him meat**, prepare him some strengthening food. V. 8.

So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, a mixture or paste of dough, **and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes,** used the batter to bake the special cakes for which he had asked. V. 9. **And she took a pan,** or the cakes prepared by her, **and poured them out before him,** served them for him to eat; **but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me,** he ordered all his attendants to leave the room. **And they went out, every man, from him.** V. 10. **And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber,** the inner room where his couch was, **that I may eat of thine hand.** He acted like a capricious patient. **And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon, her brother.** V. 11. **And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her,** throwing aside all his feigned weakness, **and said unto her, Come, lie with me, my sister.** V. 12. **And she,** in the attempt to save her honor, **answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me,** humbling her by this crime; **for no such thing ought to be done in Israel,** it was strictly in opposition to the Law, Lev. 18, 9; 20, 17; Deut. 27, 22; **do not thou this folly.** Cp. Gen. 34, 7, the passage which Tamar probably had in mind. V. 13. **And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?** Disgrace and contempt would be sure to strike her wherever she would go. **And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel,** a person who foolishly and to his own condemnation committed a heinous transgression. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.** She did not hold out an actual hope that the king would sanction the forbidden marriage, but spoke in the height of her fear, wishing to escape his passion for the present, trying to put him off by the prospect that he might be able to gratify his passion with a show of right, if he would but wait. V. 14. **Howbeit, he would not hearken unto her voice; but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her,** gratified his passionate lust. Such is the power of sin if it is not kept in check by the fear of God or by love toward the Lord.

AMNON SPURNS TAMAR. — V. 15. **Then Amnon,** having gratified his bestial lust, **hated her exceedingly,** this being the usual consequence of a relation such as pictured in this chapter, **so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her;** he now loathed the object of his former intense passion. **And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone!** V. 16. **And she said unto him, There is no cause; this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me.** The Hebrew text shows an unfinished sentence, spoken in great agitation: On account of this greater evil than the other which thou didst to me in sending me away —. If he persisted in driving her from his house, men might believe that she had given him occasion to act toward her in such a manner, and the disgrace would be all the greater. **But he would not hearken unto her,** did not, in fact, even let her finish her protest. V. 17. **Then he called his servant that ministered unto him,** his own private attendant, and said, **Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her,** just as if she had tempted him to a shameful act and he wanted to insure against a repetition of her shamelessness. V. 18. **And she had a garment of divers colors upon her,** a coat or upper garment with long sleeves; **for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins appareled.** Although she was a virgin and a princess, Amnon treated Tamar like a common prostitute. **Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.** V. 19. **And Tamar,** as a sign of her great grief over the shame laid upon her, **put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that was on her, and laid her hand on her head,** as a token of the fact that the hand of God lay heavily on her in this visitation, **and went on crying,** bewailing the greatness of her shame and disgrace. V. 20. **And Absalom, her brother, said unto her, Hath Amnon, thy brother, been with thee?** He guessed the state of affairs at once, expressing his opinion thus delicately. **But hold now thy peace, my sister; he is thy brother; regard not this thing,** lay it not to heart. He feigned a carelessness which he was far from feeling, because he wanted to conceal his purpose to revenge himself in the sight of all men. If Tamar would act in the same manner, he would have a better opportunity to carry out his design. **So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house,** literally, "as desolated," as one whose happiness in life had been destroyed. V. 21. **But when King David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.** His anger, unfortunately, did not cause him to act, to punish Amnon. Either the consciousness of his own recent sin held him back, or he practised a false indulgence toward his first-born son. V. 22. **And Absalom,** true to his plan of hiding his feelings for the time being and lulling Amnon to security, **spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad,** he simply avoided him; **for Absalom hated Amnon because he had forced his sister Tamar.** Such examples of sin as here narrated instil a loathing and a horror of sin. They show that every sin and especially such sins of the flesh are an abomination in the sight of God, evils which cause only sorrow and heartache among men.

ABSALOM'S REVENGE. — V. 23. **And it came to pass after two full years,** during all of which time Absalom carried his grudge toward Amnon in his heart, **that Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim,** some miles northeast of Bethel, where he had a ranch; **and Absalom invited all the king's sons,** for sheep-shearing was a joyous festival. V. 24. **And Absalom came to the king and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.** The invitation had originally been made to the king and his body-guard. V. 25. **And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee,** too large a number of invited guests might make the festival too expensive for Absalom. **And he,** Absalom, **pressed him,** tried to make him change his mind; **howbeit he would not go, but blessed him,** wished him success for the festival. V. 26. **Then said Absalom,** who craftily saw that this arrangement favored his plans of revenge, **If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?** He may have had some premonition of evil in hesitating about letting the heir apparent go along at this time. V. 27. **But Absalom pressed him that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.** Here was another instance of David's weakness in yielding to Absalom's urgent request. V. 28. **Now, Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine,** when, under the influence of wine, he would throw aside caution, **and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not; have not I commanded you?** He would take the responsibility of the murder upon himself, his purpose being chiefly to avenge his sister Tamar, but probably also to remove the crown prince, an act which would make him the heir apparent to the throne. **Be courageous, and be valiant.** The servants of Absalom needed this encouragement very much since they stood in awe of the king and his anger. V. 29. **And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon,** in the course of the festival meal, **as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule and fled,** fearing for his own life. V. 30. **And it came to pass, while they,** the princes, **were in the way,** on their flight to Jerusalem, **that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.** This shows the usual exaggeration of rumors. V. 31. **Then the king arose and tare his garments,** in token of his great grief, **and lay on the earth; and all his servants,** following the example of their master, **stood by with their clothes rent.** V. 32. **And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother,** who had followed the development of matters with sharp eyes, **answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men, the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead; for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar,** his determination to avenge the crime had been written in his features, in the fixed position of his mouth. V. 33. **Now, therefore, let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead,** that was not the state of affairs; **for Amnon only is dead.** V. 34. **But Absalom fled;** having accomplished his purpose, he thought it best to evade the king's wrath. **And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes,** watching the return of the people from the festival with double interest, **and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hillside behind him,** the princes coming in from the west, the shortest and quickest way. V. 35. **And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come; as thy servant said, so it is.** This confirmed Jonadab's keen guess. V. 36. **And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept, in deep mourning over the death of Amnon; and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.** V. 37. **But Absalom fled and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur,** his grandfather, chap. 3, 3. **And David mourned for his son,** namely, **for Amnon, every day,** literally, "all his days," all his life. V. 38. **So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years.** V. 39. **And the soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom,** literally, "And held back, refrained, David, the king, from going forth to Absalom"; **for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead,** the grief gradually became less sharp, and therefore David abandoned the idea of calling Absalom to account for his revenge. The word of the Lord that the sword would not depart from the house of David had begun to be fulfilled. A sin is quickly committed, and there may be a momentary gratification, but in the end the consequences are such as to make all its fruits appear apples of Sodom, as they really are.

CHAPTER 14.

The Reconciliation between David and Absalom.

The Wise Woman of Tekoah. — V. 1. **Now, Joab, the son of Zeruiah, perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom,** or, more exactly, against Absalom; David continued in his aversion to the slayer of the crown prince. V. 2. **And Joab,** either from genuine goodness of heart or with the shrewdness which sought to get into the good graces of Absalom and the people, **sent to Tekoah,** some five or six miles south of Bethlehem, **and fetched thence a wise woman,** one known for the readiness of her speech, for her boldness and shrewdness, **and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead,** one whose greatness of sorrow caused her to continue her mourning for a very long time; v. 3. **and come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth,** giving her exact and detailed instructions concerning her behavior and speech. V. 4. **And when the woman of Tekoah,** in accordance with the instructions received, **spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and did obeisance,** her great humility serving to draw the king's attention to her, **and said, Help, O king!** V. 5. **And the king said unto her, What aileth thee?** Her feigned distress caused him deep concern. **And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead,** the double statement being intended to arouse sympathy. V. 6. **And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them,** to act as arbitrator and deliverer between them, **but the one smote the other and slew him.** V. 7. **And, behold, the whole family,** the entire relationship, **is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew,** according to the law of blood-vengeance; **and we will destroy the heir also,** namely, the remaining son, whose death would make the other relatives the heirs; **and so they shall quench my coal which is left,** a figurative expression for the one son through whom her house could be built up, **and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth.** "The woman's purpose was not only to bring out the design of the kinsmen in their blood-avenging as harshly as possible, but also, with reference to David's hostile feeling to Absalom, to emphasize the point that the latter was the heir to David's throne, and to save him as such from his father's anger." V. 8. **And the king said unto the woman,** in granting her request, **Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee,** to protect her son from the pursuing relatives. V. 9. **And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me and on my father's house,** namely, in case some wrong should be connected with the fact that the unintentional murder was not avenged, **and the king and his throne be guiltless,** no blame should be attached to David's government. V. 10. **And the king said, Whosoever saith aught unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.** The matter was to be adjusted so that no one would dare to annoy the woman any more. V. 11. **Then said she,** pursuing the advantage she had gained till now, **I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord, thy God,** she pleaded with the king for his interference to the point of assuring her son's safety by an oath, **that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son.** The destruction already wrought should not be increased. **And he,** David, **said, As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.** As her appeals grew in fervor, so his assurances in emphasis. V. 12. **Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king.** She acted as if she had another matter to present. **And he said, Say on.** V. 13. **And the woman said, Wherefore, then,** after voicing such sentiments as she had just obtained from him, **hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God?** She has some difficulty in making the application to the king's own case, because she cannot speak openly, but may only, in passing, allude to Absalom. Her implication was that on account of the attitude of David toward Absalom at least some of the people were suffering. **For the king doth speak this thing,** in announcing the decision in her own case, **as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.** To be just, he must apply the same mildness in the case of Absalom which he decided for in her case. V. 14. **For we,** men in general, and Absalom in particular, **must needs die and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again,** which fate may come upon Absalom before David is aware of the fact; **neither doth God respect any person,** in calling him away by death at the time appointed by Him; **yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him,** literally, "And not takes away God a soul but He thinks out plans not to banish a banished one"; He does not cut off the life of the sinner outright, but is merciful and changes His sentence of rejection in the case of a repentant sinner. V. 15. **Now, therefore, that**

I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid, namely, by their demand to deliver her son to the avenger of blood; and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. Thus she skilfully returned to her own case. V. 16. **For the king will hear to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.** This was the point which was so awful in her sight, that of being cut off from the people of the Lord. V. 17. **Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable,** serve for her reassurance; **for as an angel of God,** the great Angel of the Covenant, **so is my lord the king to discern good and bad,** to hear the crying of his oppressed subjects and to come to the assistance of those who were in trouble; **therefore the Lord, thy God, will be with thee.** V. 18. **Then the king answered and said unto the woman,** since he had drawn his own conclusions from the skill with which she presented her matter, **Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.** V. 19. **And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?** The entire manner in which the case had been presented and handled reminded him of his general. **And the woman answered and said,** with a sincere acknowledgment of the king's sagacity, **As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken,** David, according to her praise, always hit the nail on the head; **for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid.** V. 20. **To fetch about this form of speech,** literally, "to turn about entirely the face of this matter," to change the relation then obtaining between David and Absalom, to bring about a reconciliation, **hath thy servant Joab done this thing; and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.** The woman certainly made use of fine tact and wisdom. It is a noble thing to act as advocate for another and to intercede where this will bring about better relations. Where such sagacity succeeds in convincing others, it is well-pleasing to God.

THE RECONCILIATION EFFECTED.—V. 21. **And the king said unto Joab, Behold, now, I have done this thing,** in fulfilling the request preferred through the woman of Tekoah; **go, therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.** V. 22. **And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king; and Joab said, Today thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.** His intercession had finally succeeded. V. 23. **So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.** V. 24. **And the king,** still unable to forget the crime which Absalom had committed, **said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face.** David's forgiveness was not yet perfect, it lacked sincerity. **So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face;** he was, to all intents and purposes, still banished. V. 25. **But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty,** there was no other man physically so perfect as he; **from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.** V. 26. **And when he polled his head,** when he had his hair cut, **(for it was at every year's end that he polled it; because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it,) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight** (about six pounds). V. 27. **And unto Absalom there were born three sons and one daughter, whose name was Tamar** bearing the same name as her father's sister; **she was a woman of fair countenance,** very beautiful. V. 28. **So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.** David persisted in punishing him by keeping him at a distance. V. 29. **Therefore Absalom sent for Joab to have sent him to the king,** to have this unbearable relation terminated; **but he would not come to him,** probably in order not to incur the king's displeasure; **and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.** V. 30. **Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine,** alongside of his own ground, a parcel of land which he cultivated near the city, **and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.** V. 31. **Then Joab arose and came to Absalom unto his house,** as the latter had foreseen, **and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?** V. 32. **And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither that I may send thee to the king to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? It had been good for me to have been there still,** he would have fared far better if he had remained there, as circumstances were now. **Now, therefore, let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.** Instead of showing sorrow and confessing his guilt, he denies it and challenges his father to punish him at this time. It was a defiant and bitter spirit which spoke here. David had made a mistake in the first place by letting Absalom return without a penitent confession. V. 33. **So Joab came to the king and told him; and when he**

David, **had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king,** as a token of the usual homage paid to the sovereign, but not as a mark of penitence; **and the king kissed Absalom.** So the matter was patched up, sincerely enough on the part of David, but without this spirit on the part of Absalom. Even believers find that it is altogether against their sinful nature really to forgive and to forget any wrong that has been done. But the fear of God will gradually overcome the evil with good, conquer hatred and revenge, and be reconciled to the person who has done wrong.

CHAPTER 15.

The Rebellion of Absalom.

The Insurrection Begun. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after this,** shortly after Absalom had received the pardon of his father, **that Absalom prepared him chariots,** a state-chariot, **and horses, and fifty men to run before him,** to be runners or footmen. He thus appeared before the people in royal state and influenced their minds to think of him as the coming ruler. V. 2. **And Absalom rose up early,** in order to impress people with his zeal in their behalf, **and stood beside the way of the gate,** at the entrance to the royal palace; **and it was so that, when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment,** if he had a matter in which he sought the king's decision, **then Absalom,** with every show of winning condescension, **called unto him and said, Of what city art thou?** Such an inquiry on the part of a royal prince was, of course, very flattering to the average member of the nation. **And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel,** a member of the Israelitish nation, belonging to this or that specific tribe. V. 3. **And Absalom,** who had inquired also about his business, **said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right,** his decision being made without a thorough investigation of the matter; **but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.** The "hearers" of Oriental kings were judicial officers whose duty it was to investigate the matters brought to the king's court, the king usually deciding on the basis of their findings. It is possible that neglect and partiality had crept in without the knowledge of David, so that Absalom could avail himself of a dissatisfaction already existing. V. 4. **Absalom said moreover,** in following up the advantage of the good impression made by this bid for the people's favor, **Oh that I were made judge in the land,** literally, "Who will establish me as judge in the land?" **that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!** Absalom's imagination causes him to see the people crowding around him as he sits on the throne of judgment before them, eager to correct all the faults which had crept into the judicial procedure of the kingdom V. 5. **And it was so that, when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance,** to fall down before him and render him homage, **he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him,** thus feigning an affability which was ready to acknowledge all men as brothers. V. 6. **And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel,** secretly, by guile, gained them for himself, made everything ready for the insurrection which he had planned. V. 7. **And it came to pass after forty years,** about four years after Absalom's return to Jerusalem, **that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron.** He pretended that his vow required a sacrifice in the city of his birth, but in reality he considered Hebron a city peculiarly suited for his temporary capital after he had been proclaimed king. V. 8. **For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria,** during his banishment, **saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord,** namely, by a special sacrifice. V. 9. **And the king said unto him, Go in peace.** Since full order had not yet been restored in the religious observances of Israel and the strict law of Leviticus, chap. 17, 3. 4, was not in practical operation, such sacrifices, especially in priestly cities, were not unusual at that time. **So he arose and went to Hebron,** to carry out his intention of gaining the kingdom. V. 10. **But Absalom,** having gained the hearts of the people by the methods described above, **sent spies,** emissaries, **throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.** The sound of the trumpet was to be a signal to all those who favored him to proclaim him as king over the entire nation. V. 11. **And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem that were called,** members of the king's household, such as usually accompanied the royal princes, invited to the sacrificial feast; **and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything,** they were in total ignorance of Absalom's intentions. V. 12. **And Absalom sent for Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city, even from Giloh,** a city near Hebron, **while he offered sacrifices,** for he felt that the time for the open insurrection had now come. Ahithophel had probably joined

Absalom's party some time before, turning traitor to David either from motives of ambition or on account of the affair with Bathsheba, who apparently was his relative. **And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.** His venture seemed to be very successful. Absalom is a type of a rebel who disregards the Fourth Commandment. Such people are disobedient to their parents and oppose the lawfully constituted government. Their stock in trade consists of deceits and treason, and they end by being murderers.

THE FLIGHT OF DAVID. — V. 13. **And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.** Before David had been aware of any dissatisfaction, while he was attending to the affairs of his kingdom in calm security, the damage had been done. V. 14. **And David,** seized with a sudden terror at this unexpected development, **said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom. Make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us,** thrust upon them suddenly the threatened misfortune, **and smite the city with the edge of the sword.** Not knowing how strong Absalom's army was at that time nor how vigorous the spirit of the insurrection had grown, David's move was intended to avert a storming of the city with its attendant bloodshed. V. 15. **And the king's servants said unto the king,** exhibiting a splendid faithfulness in the midst of the general defection, **Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lôrd the king shall appoint.** They assured him of their unwavering loyalty. V. 16. **And the king went forth, and all his household after him,** as his attendants and followers. **And the king left ten women, which were concubines,** a part of his harem, **to keep the house,** to guard the palace. V. 17. **And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off,** he stopped for some time at Beth-merhak, possibly a fort which guarded the passage of the Kidron, in order to gather all the faithful followers about him. V. 18. **And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites,** chap. 8, 18, **and all the Gittites,** the men who had been with David in the wilderness and had followed him from Gath on, **six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.** These companions of his wilderness wanderings were the old guard, the heroes of David, who were ready now as ever to defend their master with their lives. V. 19. **Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite,** a Philistine who had joined his forces, **Wherefore goest thou also with us? Return to thy place, and abide with the king,** to him who would occupy that position; **for thou art a stranger and also an exile,** wherefore it would not be advisable for him to take sides at this time. V. 20. **Whereas thou camest but yesterday,** having cast his fortunes with David but recently, **should I this day make thee go up and down with us? Seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren; mercy and truth be with thee.** Since the lot of David would at best be most uncertain in the near future, he did not want Ittai to share this uncertainty, which partook of the nature of a banishment, but commended him to the grace and faithfulness of God. V. 21. **And Ittai answered the king and said,** with a solemn oath, **As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.** He thus expressed his unconditional devotion and fidelity to him unto death. V. 22. **And David,** accepting this splendid vow of loyalty, **said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men,** for he had a company of his own, **and all the little ones that were with him,** the members of his family. V. 23. **And all the country,** the inhabitants of the countryside east of Jerusalem, along the line of march, **wept with a loud voice,** lamenting over the misfortune of their king; **and all the people,** those in the company of the king, **passed over. The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron,** the valley between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet, whose course is filled with water only during the winter or rainy season; **and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness,** the northern part of the wilderness of Judah, between Jerusalem and Jericho. V. 24. **And lo, Zadok also and all the Levites were with him, bearing the Ark of the Covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God,** in order to give the people that were still coming time to join the procession. **And Abiathar went up,** on the road which led over Mount Olivet toward the east, **until all the people had done passing out of the city.** Abiathar was the high priest, and Zadok was the chief officer in charge of the ark. V. 25. **And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city,** to its place in the sanctuary. **If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and His habitation;** v. 26. **but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him.** David thus resigned himself to the Lord for evil or for good, for favor or for disfavor; for he saw in these events the hand of the Lord, as the Prophet Nathan had foretold. V. 27. **The king said also unto Zadok, the priest, Art not thou a seer? Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz, thy son, and Jona-**

than, the son of Abiathar. David bade Zadok, as the second high priest and as a prophet of the Lord, to return to his place in the sanctuary, where he could, moreover, watch events as they transpired. V. 28. **See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness,** near the fords of Jordan, **until there come word from you to certify me;** he should observe the trend of events, and report to David. V. 29. **Zadok, therefore, and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem; and they tarried there,** remaining to see what the outcome would be. V. 30. **And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet,** the road which led up past its summit, **and wept as he went up, and had his head covered,** as the symbol of a sorrowful mind wholly withdrawn from the outer world, **and he went barefoot,** as a sign of great grief and humiliation; **and all the people that was with him,** following his example, **covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.** In giving way to a superior force and taking the suffering sent by the Lord upon him, David prepared the way for the salvation of the people. He appears here as a type of Christ, who also entered upon His great suffering by passing over the brook Kidron.

Hushai Goes to Jerusalem. — V. 31. **And one told David, saying, Ahithophel,** in whom David had trusted as his secret counselor, **is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said,** in a brief sigh commending the matter to the Lord, **O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.** The way for the fulfilment of this prayer was immediately prepared. V. 32. **And it came to pass that, when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshiped God,** or, where men were wont to worship God, for the summits of hills, the so-called high places, were still used for that purpose at the time of David, **behold, Hushai the Archite, came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon his head,** as a token of his sympathetic grief; v. 33. **unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me,** joining his forces in the campaign which was sure to come, **then thou shalt be a burden unto me,** probably on account of his advanced age and feeble condition; v. 34. **but if thou return to the city and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto,** in the capacity of private counselor, chap. 16, 16; 1 Chron. 27, 33, **so will I now also be thy servant, then mayest thou for me,** in the interest of David, **defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.** In this way Hushai could be of assistance in defeating the insurrection and restoring the rightful king to the throne. V. 35. **And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar, the priests?** These two men also held to the cause of David. **Therefore it shall be that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests,** with whom David had arranged to have such reports forwarded to him. V. 36. **Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me everything that ye can hear.** V. 37. **So Hushai, David's friend,** for such he remained during the events which followed, **came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem,** at about the same time. Note: It is the duty of all Christians not only to pray against the evil projects of the enemies, but also, so far as in them lies, to do all in their power to thwart the evil designs of the enemies against the kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER 16.

Events during David's Flight.

Ziba and Shimei. — V. 1. **And when David was a little past the top of the hill,** beyond the summit of Mount Olivet, **behold, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him,** having gone on in advance of the army in order to approach David after the first disorder was over, **with a couple of asses saddled and upon them two hundred loaves of bread and an hundred bunches,** or cakes, **of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits,** probably fig-cakes, **and a bottle,** a skin, **of wine.** V. 2. **And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these?** literally, "What these to thee?" What object did he have in bringing them at this time? **And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on, and the bread and the summer fruit for the young men,** the servants of the king, **to eat, and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.** This act was, unfortunately, no unselfish thoughtfulness, but rather a shrewd move to gain the king's favor, since Ziba felt sure that David would come out victor over his son. V. 3. **And the king said, And where is thy master's son,** Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan? **And Ziba,** taking this opportunity to cast an unfounded suspicion upon his master, **said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem; for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.** Ziba intimated that Mephibosheth expected the present disorder to result in his being restored to royal dignity and power, this lie being told in

order to obtain possession of the estate which he was now taking care of by the king's order, chap. 9, 9—11. V. 4. **Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth;** all the latter's lands were to be transferred to Ziba for this supposed act of loyalty, whereas, in reality, Ziba was not only a liar, but also a thief and traitor, as the sequel shows, chap. 19, 26—29. **And Ziba said,** still playing the part of a loyal friend of the king, though he was a hypocrite, **I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.** He expressed the hope that David might continue to show himself a gracious sovereign to him. David, in the excitement of the flight and his consequent distracted state, became guilty of a double wrong, by treating the faithful Mephibosheth as a traitor without hearing his testimony and by rewarding the slander of the false Ziba without investigating the charges made by him. V. 5. **And when King David came to Bahurim,** some little distance beyond Mount Olivet, **behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul,** a distant relative of Saul, **whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came forth, and cursed still as he came,** literally, "Going forth he went forth, and cursed," that is, he cursed as he went along. V. 6. **And he cast stones at David and at all the servants of King David,** those of his body-guard; **and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.** In spite of this fact Shimei dared to offer this insult. V. 7. **And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out,** literally, "Out, out," namely, out of the kingdom and out of the land, **thou bloody man,** probably with reference to Ishbosheth and Abner, for he falsely connected David with these murders, **and thou man of Belial,** vain and good-for-nothing scoundrel! V. 8. **The Lord hath returned upon thee,** as a just recompense, **all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned,** the implication being that this was done contrary to right and justice; **and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom, thy son,** as a just punishment for the misdeeds of the past; **and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief,** literally, "Behold thee in thy evil," **because thou art a bloody man,** a man of blood art thou, rejoicing in murders. This vile talk was all the more reprehensible since Shimei used the name of the Lord and ascribed the present state of affairs to Jehovah. V. 9. **Then said Abishai, the son of Zeruiah,** one of David's generals and heroes, **unto the king, Why should this dead dog,** this despicable, vile cur, chap. 9, 8, **curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head,** making Shimei atone for his reviling with his life. V. 10. **And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?** Joab had probably agreed with his brother Abishai on the need of swift and drastic measures against Shimei, and David declared with great emphasis that he could not share their attitude. **So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.** In his humility David was willing to consider it a special dispensation on the part of God, permitting Shimei to cast such aspersions upon him. **Who shall, then, say, Wherefore hast thou done so?** V. 11. **And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels,** whose true father he was, **seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it?** It was far less surprising that a member of a hostile family should act in this manner. **Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.** V. 12. **It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction,** on the guilt of sins which David really had, since he felt that he had deeply offended the Lord, though not in the matter mentioned by Shimei, **and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.** Note that David's humility is again apparent in this "perhaps"; he will not be sure of the divine blessing even now, but leaves the matter in the hands of God. V. 13. **And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him,** separated from the army of David by the valley, **and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.** It seems, then, that David's quiet behavior only enraged Shimei all the more, causing him to become ever more challenging in his vile conduct. V. 14. **And the king and all the people that were with him came weary,** they arrived at Ajephim, a caravansary, or camping-place for travelers, **and refreshed themselves there.** Like David, all believers are obliged occasionally to endure the mockery, the scorn, the blasphemy of the world. But in such cases they do not revenge themselves, leaving the matter, instead, in the hands of Him who has said: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay."

THE COUNSEL OF AHITHOPHEL. — V. 15. **And Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem,** the men who had cast their lot with the rebellious son of David, **and Ahithophel with him,** the counselor who had turned traitor to David. V. 16. **And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend,** whom the king had persuaded to return to Jerusalem the better to serve his interests, **was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king,** the double "May the king live" being intended to express his best wishes, since he does not state the name of the king to whom he refers. V. 17. **And Absalom,** who was astonished and even suspicious at this greeting, **said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why**

wentest thou not with thy friend? Hushai's relation to David had been a matter of common knowledge. V. 18. **And Hushai said unto Absalom,** deliberately casting dust into his eyes, **Nay; but whom the Lord and this people,** those who had joined the cause of Absalom, **and all the men of Israel,** the entire nation, **choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.** He infers that the choice of the nation in this case is the choice of Jehovah. V. 19. **And again,** his second reason, **whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son?** This idea he presented to Absalom as self-evident. **As I have served in thy father's presence,** before the face of thy father, **so will I be in thy presence.** This flattered and satisfied Absalom, vain as he was, immensely, for he felt that the best minds of the nation were now on his side. V. 20. **Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.** He was anxious to take some steps by which his authority would definitely be announced and secured. V. 21. **And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines,** in public carnal intercourse, **which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father,** since the insult would be practically unforgivable and since the act, according to Oriental usage, would indicate actual dethronement of his father, since he would thereby take over his harem; **then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong,** they would be greatly encouraged to decide in his favor. V. 22. **So they spread Absalom a tent, the** tent commonly used as a protection against sun, wind, and rain, **upon the top of the house,** on the same roof where David's look at Bathsheba led him into the path of sin; **and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel,** in an unspeakably filthy act, but one which fulfilled the words of Nathan against David, chap. 12, 8. V. 23. **And the counsel of Ahithophel which he counseled in those days was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God,** it was regarded and followed as if inspired by God Himself, a far too high estimate of any man's ability; **so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.** Rebels who overthrow the order of God in rising against the government instituted by Him are very often the slaves of the most loathsome sins and vices, their hearts hardened against every influence for good.

CHAPTER 17.

The Campaign against David.

HUSHAI'S COUNSEL ACCEPTED. — V. 1. **Moreover, Ahithophel,** whose filthy counsel Absalom had just followed, **said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men,** a thousand for each of the twelve tribes, **and I will arise and pursue after David this night,** the very night after his flight; v. 2. **and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed,** the hand being the symbol of strength, **and will make him afraid,** cause terror to fall upon him; **and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only,** namely, while he is alone, forsaken by his men; v. 3. **and I will bring back all the people unto thee,** also the men who had joined David; **the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned,** David alone being equivalent to all the people in influence and power, his death will cause all his adherents to espouse the cause of Absalom. **So all the people shall be in peace,** the one obstacle to this condition being removed with the fall of David. V. 4. **And the saying pleased Absalom well and all the elders of Israel,** for it was in truth the very best plan in favor of Absalom's cause. V. 5. **Then said Absalom,** by the dispensation of God, **Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith,** what counsel is in his mouth. V. 6. **And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner,** outlining his plan briefly; **shall we do after his saying,** follow the word of his counsel? **If not, speak thou.** Hushai was in a delicate position, which required all the tact and wisdom he possessed; for it was necessary for him to feign the closest friendship for Absalom, while furthering the cause of David. V. 7. **And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.** The implication is that the first advice was fine and well worthy of taking, but in this case he overlooked certain facts. V. 8. **For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men that they be mighty men,** valiant heroes, far from being exhausted by a short march, **and they be chafed in their minds,** embittered in spirit, **as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field,** doubly dangerous at such a time; **and thy father is a man of war,** acquainted with all the arts of warfare, **and will not lodge with the people,** he would not permit himself to be taken by surprise in an unfortified camp. V. 9. **Behold, he is hid now in some pit or in some other place,** either in a natural stronghold or in a fortified position; **and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first,** if Absalom's advance guard should be thrown back by a sudden attack on the part of David, **that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter**

among the people that follow Absalom. The mere report of a surprise attack on the part of David would be exaggerated into a defeat of Absalom's entire force. V. 10. **And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion,** the most courageous on the side of Absalom, **shall utterly melt; for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.** Hushai purposely emphasized this point, in order to magnify the prowess of David and his men and to strike terror to the heart of Absalom. V. 11. **Therefore I counsel that all Israel,** the entire army of the nation, all men able to bear arms, **be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude,** again said with wilful exaggeration; **and that thou go to battle in thine own person,** Absalom was to lead his great army in person, a suggestion which could not fail of making a deep impression on his vanity. V. 12. **So shall we,** for Hushai skilfully includes himself with the host of Absalom, **come upon him in some place where he shall be found,** no matter where this might be, **and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground,** coming quietly, but covering, drenching, and submerging him and his army completely; **and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.** V. 13. **Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river,** on whose banks all the fortified cities were built, **until there be not one small stone found there.** In his exaggerated manner, Hushai pictures the entire city dragged into the neighboring brook or river, the walls with the houses and all the inhabitants. V. 14. **And Absalom and all the men of Israel,** overcome by the boastful boldness and the skilful plausibility of the plan outlined, **said, The plan of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel,** for the latter would undoubtedly have been successful, **to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.** He should be blind to his own advantage, fatuously believing that the entire nation would immediately rally around him, while David would gain time to perfect his plans and to overthrow the insurrection. Mark: It is well-pleasing to God if we oppose all rebels and scoundrels who attempt to overthrow divine and human order. And God, on His part, often blinds the eyes of such rebellious persons, especially such as oppose Christ and His government, causing them to fall from one foolish move into another and to bring destruction upon themselves.

DAVID IN THE COUNTRY EAST OF JORDAN. — V. 15. **Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar, the priests,** giving them a report of his efforts in David's behalf, **Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counseled.** V. 16. **Now, therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying,** offering him advice which he could not afford to ignore, **Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness,** near the fords on the west side of the river, **but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.** There was always danger that an expedition might be sent against him before he had completed his plans and gotten ready to defend himself. He would be safer at any rate on the east side, where he might also find additional followers. V. 17. **Now, Jonathan and Ahimaaz,** the sons of the high priests and their messengers to David, **stayed by En-rogel,** they were standing at this spring, near the southeast corner of Jerusalem; **for they might not be seen to come into the city; and a wench,** one of the high priest's servant girls, **went and told them,** delivered to them the advice of Hushai; **and they went and told King David,** they started out to deliver the message. V. 18. **Nevertheless, a lad saw them, and told Absalom,** probably being a spy set to watch the priests; **but they,** finding themselves discovered, **went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim,** between Jerusalem and Jericho, chap. 16, 5, **which had a well,** evidently empty, **in his court, whither they went down,** to hide themselves from their pursuers. V. 19. **And the woman,** the wife of this man, with quick presence of mind, **took and spread a covering over the well's mouth,** over the opening of the cistern, **and spread ground corn thereon,** as if she were drying barley-groats; **and the thing was not known,** for the opening was not visible and could therefore not arouse suspicions. V. 20. **And when Absalom's servants,** in their pursuit of the two messengers, **came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman,** purposely dissembling to shield the messengers, **said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water,** some creek in the neighborhood to which she pointed. **And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.** V. 21. **And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told King David, and said unto David,** according to the counsel of Hushai, **Arise, and pass quickly over the water,** the Jordan; **for thus hath Ahithophel counseled against you,** and there was still danger that his counsel might be reconsidered. V. 22. **And David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan; by the morning light,** by the time the new day dawned, **there lacked not one of them**

that was not gone over Jordan, they had passed over to the very last man. Thus God had protected David, the situation of affairs now being in his favor. V. 23. **And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed,** his advice was not carried out, **he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city,** chap. 15, 12, **and put his household in order,** regulated all his affairs, **and hanged himself, and died,** a suicide from baffled ambition and despair, since he foresaw the overthrow of the insurrection, **and was buried in the sepulcher of his father.** The prayer of David, chap. 15, 31, was thus fulfilled. V. 24. **Then David came to Mahanaim,** a fortified city of Gilead, near the ford of Jabbok. **And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him,** all the warriors whom he had assembled according to the advice of Hushai. V. 25. **And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab,** he occupied the same position in the rebel army which Joab held in that of David; **which Amasa was a man's son whose name was Ithra, an Israelite,** of Ishmaelite stock, 1 Chron. 2, 16. 17, **that went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash** (or Jesse), **sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother.** Amasa and Joab were cousins (step-cousins). V. 26. **So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.** V. 27. **And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi, the son of Nahash, of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir, the son of Ammiel, of Lo-debar,** who had formerly sheltered Mephibosheth, chap. 9, 4, **and Barzillai, the Gileadite of Rogelim,** v. 28. **brought beds,** quantities of bedding, **and basins,** vessels for preparing food, **and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn,** roasted grain, **and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse,** roasted pulse-beans, v. 29. **and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine,** a milk-food on the order of cottage cheese, **for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat; for they said, The people is hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.** So it was by no means all Israel that was on the side of Absalom, for here wealthy and influential men came to David's assistance. That was a noble deed, and similar works of love will be rewarded by the Lord according to His promise.

CHAPTER 18.

The End of Absalom's Rebellion.

THE END OF ABSALOM. — V. 1. **And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them,** the mustering being done with the care of the experienced general. V. 2. **And David,** having made three divisions of his army, **sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab and a third part under the hand of Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite,** the three divisions thus being sent forth under the command of these three tested warriors. **And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also,** in supreme command of all the forces. V. 3. **But the people,** who loved him and were thoroughly loyal to him, **answered, Thou shalt not go forth; for if we flee away, they will not care for us,** that fact would have comparatively little weight with them; **neither if half of us die, will they care for us,** that also would not really satisfy their hearts; **but, now, thou art worth ten thousand of us,** his power and influence was equivalent to that of ten thousand common soldiers; **therefore, now, it is better that thou succor us out of the city,** remaining with a reserve corps in case assistance should be needed at any point of the battle-line. V. 4. **And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do,** he agreed to this prudent suggestion. **And the king stood by the gate side,** in the entrance of the city gate, **and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands,** he reviewed them as they marched by. V. 5. **And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom;** they should abstain from all harshness against his person. **And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom,** the command was given in the hearing of the entire army. V. 6. **So the people went out into the field against Israel,** the army of David advancing to the attack; **and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim,** in the northeastern part of the country of Gilead; v. 7. **where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David,** completely defeated by the veteran army of the king, **and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.** V. 8. **For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country,** it was spread out over the entire woody mountain terrain, which was cut up by deep gorges; **and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured,** for soldiers were lost in the mountain fastnesses and perished from exhaustion and hunger. V. 9. **And Absalom met the servants of David,** he found himself face to face with the heroes of David and in imminent danger of being cap-

tured. **And Absalom rode upon a mule**, the animal used for riding by the royal children; **and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak**, one of the splendid terebinths of the forest, **and his head caught hold of the oak**, evidently because his long hair, of which he was so proud, wrapped around a limb; **and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth**, suspended from the tree by the hair of his head. **And the mule that was under him went away**, continuing his flight without his master. V. 10. **And a certain man**, a private of the army of David, **saw it and told Joab**, making a report to his commander, **and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.** V. 11. **And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground?** Joab severely reprimanded the private as though he had neglected an important duty. **And I would have given thee ten shekels of silver and a girdle**, as a reward for killing Absalom. V. 12. **And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand**, literally, "weighed into my hand," that is, seven hundred dollars instead of the seven offered, **yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son; for in our hearing** v. 5. **the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom**, to harm his person or to take his life. V. 13. **Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life**, literally, "Had I dealt deceitfully against his life," by acting against the express prohibition of the king; **for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me**, appearing before the king as accuser and causing the private to be punished. V. 14. **Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee**, losing time in this discussion, instead of doing what he considered necessary. **And he took three darts in his hand**, wooden staffs sharpened to be weapons, **and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak**, suspended in the thicket of its branches. V. 15. **And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him**, completing the work of their master. V. 16. **And Joab blew the trumpet**, since Absalom's death made further fighting unnecessary, **and the people returned from pursuing after Israel; for Joab held back the people**, since he wanted to spare the party of Absalom and not provoke a civil war. V. 17. **And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood**, not granting him a proper burial, **and laid a very great heap of stones upon him**, a sign of embittered feeling for the rebel, a proper monument of shame for his crime; **and all Israel fled, every one to his tent**, to his own home. The rebellion was definitely broken. V. 18. **Now, Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar**, a monument of stone, **which is in the king's dale**, Gen. 28, 22; 31, 52, the valley of the Kidron, some distance east of Jerusalem; **for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance**, those mentioned chap. 14, 27 evidently having died in early childhood; **and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called unto this day Absalom's Place**, literally, "Absalom's Hand," recalling his memory like an uplifted hand. A significant contrast: the monument which his own vanity erected during his lifetime, and that actually placed over his body after his death! His example shows how jealously God guards the honor of parents and masters according to the Fourth Commandment, how severely He punishes disobedience and contempt of the authorities established by Him.

DAVID'S LAMENT FOR ABSALOM. — V. 19. **Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok**, who was with the troops, **Let me now run and bear the king tidings how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies**, it was the direct divine interposition which had brought David justice. V. 20. **And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings**, be a messenger, **this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou shalt bear no tidings because the king's son is dead.** Joab felt that the king might be angry because Absalom had been put to death, and he did not want Ahimaaz to be exposed to this anger. V. 21. **Then said Joab to Cushi**, probably an Egyptian slave in his service, **Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab and ran.** V. 22. **Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, yet again to Joab, But, howsoever**, no matter what may happen, **let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi.** He was anxious to convey what he thought was excellent news to David. **And Joab**, still unwilling to let the young man incur the anger of David, **said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?** His message would not be profitable, since the king was bound to consider it bad, from his standpoint, and would therefore look upon him as a messenger of evil. V. 23. **But, howsoever**, just the same, **said he, let me run.** He was willing to take the risk. **And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain and overran Cushi**, reaching Mahanaim before the real messenger arrived. V. 24. **And David sat between the two gates**, the space between the outer and the inner gates; **and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall**, over the outer gate, which was connected with the city wall, **and lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, a man running alone.**

V. 25. **And the watchman cried and told the king,** whom his voice could reach, as he sat beneath the entrance arch or vault. **And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth,** he came as a messenger, for in the other event there would be several fugitives. **And he,** the runner, **came apace, and drew near.** V. 26. **And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter,** the keeper of the gate, **and said, Behold, another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings,** he also must surely be a messenger. V. 27. **And the watchman said, Me thinketh that the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok,** for by this time he could distinguish the peculiarities of the runner's gait. **And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings,** since Joab would certainly not have chosen him for evil news. V. 28. **And Ahimaaz,** as soon as he came into hailing distance, **called and said unto the king, All is well,** literally, "Peace!" or, "Hail!" **And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king,** in an attitude of reverence, **and said, Blessed be the Lord, thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.** The revolt was so effectually quenched that the rebels could no longer stir. V. 29. **And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz,** in an attempt to temporize, to evade the question, **answered, When Joab sent the king's servant,** namely, Cushi, **and me, thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.** He made the impression that Absalom's fate was not yet decided when Joab sent him off. V. 30. **And the king said unto him, Turn aside and stand here,** making way for the second messenger. **And he turned aside and stood still.** V. 31. **And, behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king,** he came as an official messenger; **for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee,** that was the way in which the victory must be regarded, as a direct interposition of God. V. 32. **And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.** It was an indirect announcement of Absalom's destruction, and in a manner which properly expressed condemnation of Absalom's hostile attempt against his father and king. V. 33. **And the king,** weakly losing sight of the avenging hand of God in this death, **was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate,** probably that used by the watchmen of the city, **and wept, and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!** He was more deeply afflicted by the death of this rebellious son than by any event in his life. It is a blessing of God if dangerous and rebellious people, who lead others into temptation and destruction, are destroyed by God's wrath. In such cases the believers have all reason to thank and praise God for the justice of His punishments.

CHAPTER 19.

Restoration of David's Royal Authority.

David Reinstated in His Royal Power. — V. 1. **And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.** He was immersed in his immoderate and sinful grief for Absalom, and did not even take time to greet his victorious army upon its return. V. 2. **And the victory,** the deliverance or salvation from the hands of the murderous rebels under the leadership of Absalom, **was turned into mourning unto all the people; for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.** But while they respected his fatherly grief and, in a measure, shared his sorrow, they were gradually filled with dissatisfaction over the fact that the king did not seem to have one word of cheer or appreciation for them. V. 3. **And the people,** the soldiers of the army, infected with the gloom which hung over the entire city and its vicinity, **gat them by stealth that day into the city,** instead of entering in military order and with shouts of victory, they stole away in small groups and crept into the city as unobtrusively as possible, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle, like disgraced fugitives who find it impossible to face their friends and relatives. V. 4. **But the king covered his face,** in unrestrained grief and shame, **and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!** He had almost worked himself into a hysteria over the loss of his worthless son, the rebel against the entire kingdom. V. 5. **And Joab came into the house to the king and said,** in a stern reproof, which was intended to restore the king to his senses, **Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants,** behaved in a shameful manner toward them, **which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines,** for, according to Oriental custom, Absalom, if he had been victorious, might have slain the entire royal household;

v. 6. **in that thou lovest thine enemies,** those that hate thee, as his excessive lamenting for Absalom showed, **and hatest thy friends,** for that would be the logical conclusion. **For thou hast declared this day,** by his behavior, **that thou regardest neither princes nor servants,** for David acted as if they simply did not exist, paying no attention to them; **for this day I perceive that, if Absalom had lived and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.** It was a rude reproof, with deductions which went too far; but it was intended to jolt David severely, to rouse him from his strange behavior. V. 7. **Now, therefore, arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto,** literally, "to the heart of," **thy servants,** showing them some measure of appreciation, satisfying and refreshing their minds; **for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night,** not that he himself would lead the army away, but that the dissatisfaction had reached a stage where this result was inevitable; **and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.** V. 8. **Then the king,** accepting the reproof in the spirit in which it was given, **arose and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate.** This news worked a joyful reaction in the hearts of the people. **And all the people came before the king,** apparently passing before him in review, in order to receive the expressions of his appreciation and gratitude; **for Israel had fled every man to his tent,** chap. 18, 17. V. 9. **And all the people,** those who had been adherents of Absalom, **were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel,** they began to discuss the matter, to argue, to reproach one another, **saying, The king saved us out of the hands of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines,** all these deeds of David now being recalled; **and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom,** a fugitive before his rebellious son. V. 10. **And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now, therefore, why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?** So the representatives of the people consulted with one another about restoring the throne to David and declaring to him their renewed loyalty. V. 11. **And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar, the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.** So David had information concerning the movement in the other parts of the kingdom, and expressed surprise that the men in the capital and in the tribe of Judah were not taking similar steps. V. 12. **Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh,** they were of his tribe and of his kindred; **wherefore, then, are ye the last to bring back the king?** "Conscious that they had offended David, and fearing Absalom's garrison in Zion, they did not dare to recall him." V. 13. **And say ye to Amasa,** who had been the commander of Absalom's forces, chap. 17, 25, **Art thou not of my bone and of my flesh?** He was David's nephew. **God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host, before me continually in the room of Joab.** He was to supersede Joab, who on account of his rudeness and his plain disregard for the royal command had forfeited his post. V. 14. **And he,** David, **bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man,** completely winning them for his side, **so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants.** David had been shrewd enough to see that it would have been poor policy to force himself upon his tribe, just as it would have been foolish to wait for a spontaneous, general invitation on their part. By assuring them of his favor, however, and by reminding them of the relationship between him and them, he removed all difficulties. V. 15. **So the king returned and came to Jordan. And Judah,** the representatives of the entire tribe, **came to Gilgal, in the valley of Jordan, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.** All was ready for a solemn and joyous reception. V. 16. **And Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim,** the man who had behaved himself in such a vile manner during David's flight, chap. 16, 7—14. **hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.** He wanted to undo his evil, if possible, before he would be called to account. V. 17. **And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him and Ziba, the servant of the house of Saul,** he who had slandered his master when he met David by the way, chap. 16, 3, **and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king,** fording the river in order to meet him on the east side. V. 18. **And there went over a ferry-boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good,** to be placed at the disposal of the king. **And Shimei, the son of Gera, fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan,** as soon as he had crossed by the ford; v. 19. **and said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me,** charge up the guilt to him, **neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart,** bear him a grudge on account of it. V. 20. **For thy servant doth know that I have sinned; therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the**

house of Joseph, representing all the tribes of Israel outside of Judah, **to go down to meet my lord the king.** V. 21. **But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah,** who, apparently with good reason, doubted the sincerity of Shimei, especially since the latter was moved to confess his sin only when David had returned to power, **answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?** Cp. Ex. 22, 27; Lev. 24, 14. 15. V. 22. **And David,** rejecting the proposal as once before, chap. 16, 10. 11, **said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me?** The measure suggested by them was altogether out of harmony with his own inclination on this happy occasion. **Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? For do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?** He felt that his restoration to the kingdom really was a proof of his being accepted into the divine favor once more, and he wanted to show his appreciation by being merciful. V. 23. **Therefore the king,** without further discussion of the matter, **said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.** The pardon was granted evidently chiefly for political reasons. Evidences of special assistance and favor of God so influence the hearts of the believers that they are glad to forgive their enemies.

David's Treatment of Mephibosheth and Barzillai. — V. 24. **And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul** (in the wider sense, since he was his grandson) **came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes,** all evidences of deepest mourning, signs of his sincere, faithful attachment to the house of David, **from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.** V. 25. **And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king,** when the inhabitants of Jerusalem went down in a body to welcome David, Mephibosheth being in the procession also, **that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?** This question was prompted by Ziba's slander, chap. 16, 3. V. 26. **And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant** (Ziba) **deceived me,** he had injured him by lies, betrayed his confidence; **for thy servant** (Mephibosheth) **said, I will saddle me an ass,** Ziba being ordered to do this, **that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame,** he could not have joined the procession afoot. V. 27. **And he** (Ziba) **hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king,** as Mephibosheth had meanwhile found out; **but my lord the king is as an angel of God,** to know and to do what justice required in this case; **do, therefore, what is good in thine eyes.** V. 28. **For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king,** who might, according to Oriental custom, have put them all to death upon his accession to the throne; **yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table,** chap. 9, 7. 10. 13. **What right, therefore, have I yet to cry any more unto the king?** Being without rights, he willingly subjected himself to any order which the king might give. V. 29. **And the king said unto him,** evidently unwilling to acknowledge that he had done wrong in accepting the slander of Ziba, **Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.** This was not quite in conformity with the truth, since David had restored the entire inheritance of Saul to Mephibosheth and merely made Ziba the farmer or steward of the estate, chap. 9, 6—11. V. 30. **And Mephibosheth,** without a word of protest against this manifest injustice, **said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.** This fact was worth more to his loyal soul than the possession of the estate at Gibeah. Mark: Sin, also in the case of David, weakens the will, the evil consequences being seen in false decisions. V. 31. **And Barzillai the Gileadite,** one of those men who had sent provisions for David and his army to Mahanaim, chap. 17, 27, **came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king to conduct him over Jordan,** intending only to accompany David to the other side of the river, and then to return. V. 32. **Now, Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old; and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim,** before the army of the rebels had been dispersed; **for he was a very great man,** rich and influential. V. 33. **And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem,** in return for the kindness shown him in Mahanaim. V. 34. **And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?** His expectation of life was so short that he did not want to plunge into the dissipations of court life. V. 35. **I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil?** His intellect was becoming so dull that he would have made a poor counselor. **Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?** His senses becoming feeble, he could no longer enjoy the pleasures of court life. **Wherefore, then, should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?** V. 36. **Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king,** only to escort him across the river; **and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?** He

had not shown his kindness with the expectation of any return. V. 37. **Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again that I may die in mine own city and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother.** Since the king might have commanded him to go along to Jerusalem, Barzillai, in all simplicity and cheerfulness, requests permission to return home, since life at court held no allurement for him. **But behold thy servant Chimham,** his son, who had accompanied his aged father to the meeting with the king; **let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.** He was still young enough to enter into the service of the king. V. 38. **And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee,** deferring to the aged father's wishes; **and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee,** for he still considered himself under obligations to Barzillai. V. 39. **And all the people went over Jordan,** the passage was finally effected. **And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him,** taking leave of him in an affectionate and respectful manner; **and he returned unto his own place.** V. 40. **Then the king went on to Gilgal,** the ancient encampment near the site of Jericho, **and Chimham went on with him; and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel,** as many as had been able to assemble at this time. V. 41. **And, behold, all the men of Israel,** representatives of all the other tribes, **came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away,** in arranging this reception, **and have brought the king and his household and all David's men with him over Jordan?** V. 42. **And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us,** being a member of their tribe; **wherefore, then, be ye angry for this matter? Have we eaten at all of the king's cost?** They had enjoyed no special privileges from him, had not been fed by the royal bounty. **Or hath he given us any gift?** It was a case where jealousy once more led to unpleasant rivalry and finally to hostility. V. 43. **And the men of Israel,** reacting to the sharp words of Judah in kind, **answered the men of Judah and said, We have ten parts in the king,** since theirs were ten tribes to the two of Judah and Benjamin, **and we have also more right in David than ye,** by virtue of their greater number; **why, then, did ye despise us,** by slighting them, by not inviting them, **that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?** Their word had been first, the suggestion to bring back the king had come from members of Israel. **And the words of the men of Judah,** in this unpleasant quarrel over precedence, in this jealous ill feeling, **were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.** The entire scene led to a new, evil purpose on the part of Israel; it paved the way for Sheba's rebellion. The entire matter, in the hands of God, was a means to keep David humble. For such is His way of dealing with His believers.

CHAPTER 20.

The Insurrection of Sheba.

THE MURDER OF AMASA. — V. 1. **And there happened to be there a man of Belial,** a vain and worthless scoundrel, **whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite,** evidently one of the rabid party of Saul; **and he blew a trumpet,** as a call to all those who thought as he did on account of the strained relations between Judah and Israel, **and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse,** the northern tribes had nothing in common with him, nothing to do with him; **every man to his tents, O Israel!** It was a call to rebellion. V. 2. **So every man of Israel,** of the ten northern tribes, **went up from after David,** renouncing his allegiance to the king, **and followed Sheba, the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.** They remained loyal, they did not permit their faithfulness to be shaken. V. 3. **And David came to his house at Jerusalem,** after the outbreak of this rebellion; **and the king took the ten women, his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house,** chap. 15, 16; 16, 21. 22, **and put them in ward,** in a house by themselves, **and fed,** maintained, **them, but went not in unto them,** for they were impure to him, having been approached by Absalom. **So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood,** in perpetual widowhood. V. 4. **Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days,** he was given orders to mobilize them for the purpose of punishing the rebel Sheba, **and be thou here present,** for David intended formally to appoint him commander-in-chief, chap. 19, 13. V. 5. **So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah; but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him,** he delayed beyond the three days given him, the reason for this state of affairs not being mentioned. V. 6. **And David said to Abishai,** one of his commanders, **Now shall Sheba, the son of Bichri, do us**

more harm than did Absalom, on account of the delay in calling him to account; **take thou thy lord's servants,** the part of the standing army stationed at Jerusalem, **and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities and escape us,** literally, "and deliver himself from our eyes," or, "darken not our sight," by hiding himself and eventually harming the cause of David. V. 7. **And there went out after him Joab's men,** for as such the standing army was known, **and the Cherethites and the Pelethites,** chap. 8, 18, **and all the mighty men; and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri.** V. 8. **When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon,** northwest of Jerusalem, **Amasa went before them,** coming towards them with the levy of troops which he had raised. **And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him,** his military garment being held close to his body by the girdle, **and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth,** rather, the sheath slipped out, **it fell out,** that is, the sword fell to the ground. This apparent accident happened just before Amasa came up to Joab, and the fact that the latter picked up and held the sword in his left hand would arouse no suspicions. V. 9. **And Joab,** apparently with sincere friendliness, **said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him,** drawing down his face with a caressing gesture. V. 10. **But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand,** namely, in his left, with which he had just picked it up; **so he, Joab, smote him therewith in the fifth rib,** in the abdomen, **and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again,** for there was no need for repeating the blow; **and he died.** It was a cold-blooded murder, an act of malice, the product of jealousy and the desire for revenge. **So Joab and Abishai,** after the murder of Amasa, **pursued after Sheba, the son of Bichri.** V. 11. **And one of Joab's men stood by him, Amasa, and said, He that favoreth Joab,** has pleasure and confidence in him, **and he that is for David, let him go after Joab,** the cause of David thus being identified with that of Joab. V. 12. **And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway,** a conspicuous object. **And when the man who had been left behind by Joab saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him,** so that his corpse would no longer draw attention, **when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.** Thus the danger of an unfavorable impression for Joab and his cause was removed, for the crowd now passed forward without inquiring into the matter. V. 13. **When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri.** The act of Joab in removing his rival in this manner is inexcusable. The higher the public office which a person holds, the more he must be able to overlook ingratitude and slights.

The Death of Sheba. — V. 14. **And he,** Joab, **went through all the tribes of Israel,** moving ever northward through the country of the ten tribes, **unto Abel and to Beth-maachah,** in the territory of Naphtali, **and all the Berites; and they were gathered together and went also after him,** his army was continually increased by the addition of chosen young men who flocked to his standards. V. 15. **And they came and besieged him,** Sheba, **in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank,** threw up a high embankment, **against the city, and it stood in the trench,** it reached the height of, and was joined to, the outer wall or works of the fortress; **and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall,** the inner wall, **to throw it down.** V. 16. **Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear! Say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither that I may speak with thee.** V. 17. **And when he,** acting upon her suggestion, **was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.** V. 18. **Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying,** it was a proverbial saying, **They shall surely ask counsel at Abel; and so they ended the matter.** The discretion and wisdom of the city's inhabitants were so widely known that their advice was acted upon without question. So in this case the inhabitants of Abel should first have been consulted before laying siege to the city. V. 19. **I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel,** for she speaks in the name of the entire city. **Thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel,** one of the chief cities of the nation; **why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?** V. 20. **And Joab,** struck by the sensibility of the argument, **answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy,** in a ruthless and senseless manner. V. 21. **The matter is not so, he had no intention of being wilfully cruel; but a man of Mount Ephraim, Sheba, the son of Bichri, by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David; deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall,** or "through the wall," through one of the openings or loopholes. V. 22. **Then the woman went unto all the people,** the citizens of Abel, **in her wisdom,** laying the proposition of Joab before

them, which she persuaded them to accept. **And they cut off the head of Sheba, the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he,** his purpose having been attained, **blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent.** The return march was begun at once. **And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.** V. 23. **Now, Joab was over all the host of Israel,** the commander-in-chief of the armies; **and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites,** the king's body-guard, including his runners and the official executioners; v. 24. **and Adoram was over the tribute,** overseer of the public works; **and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was recorder,** chancellor; v. 25. **and Sheva was scribe,** secretary of state; **and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests;** v. 26. **and Ira, also, the Jairite was a chief ruler about David,** confidential couselor. In spite of many mistakes of men the work of the Lord, also in His Church, must go forward according to His intentions.

CHAPTER 21.

Famine and Expiation.

THE DIFFICULTY WITH THE GIBEONITES ADJUSTED. — V. 1. **Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year,** three successive years, a fact which made the visitation seem a special punishment; **and David enquired of the Lord,** he sought the face of the Lord, by consulting with the high priest, after earnest prayer. **And the Lord answered, It is for Saul and for his bloody house,** the house upon which blood-guiltiness rested, **because he slew the Gibeonites,** he had put to death a number of those people to whom Joshua and the princes of Israel had sworn immunity, Josh. 9, 15. V. 2. **And the king called the Gibeonites and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites,** as the author here inserts for the sake of the people of his time, **were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites,** this name here designating the heathen nations of Canaan in general; **and the children of Israel had sworn unto them; and Saul,** disregarding the oath and the covenant, **sought to slay,** to exterminate, **them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah;)** v. 3. **wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? And wherewith shall I make the atonement,** expiate the wrong done and appease the Lord's anger, **that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?** He wanted them to change their maledictions upon Israel into blessings. V. 4. **And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul,** they wanted no compensation of money in exchange for the blood shed by Saul, **nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel,** they had no right to put any one to death; they wanted blood revenge, but could not proceed without the consent and command of David. **And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.** It is really a question asking them to express themselves more exactly, to state their request in specific terms. V. 5. **And they answered the king, The man that consumed us,** who had slain the best of their tribe and practically annihilated them, **and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,** v. 6. **let seven men of his sons,** descendants, near relatives, **be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up,** punish them by crucifixion, **unto the Lord,** before His face, to appease His anger, **in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord did choose.** Saul had been the "chosen of Jehovah," king of Israel, when he had done this wrong, and therefore the whole people was being punished. **And the king said, I will give them.** He was ready to make the atonement. V. 7. **But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul.** The oath of the covenant between David and Jonathan had included the promise of sparing the sons of Jonathan, 1 Sam. 20, 15. 16. V. 8. **But the king took the two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth,** the sons of Saul's concubine, **and the five sons of Michal, the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for,** literally, "had born to," **Adriel, the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.** Evidently Michal, who had originally been the wife of David, 1 Sam. 18, 27, and was later given to Phaltiel, 1 Sam. 25, 44, to be returned to David upon his accession to the throne, 2 Sam. 3, 15, had also, for some years, been the wife of this Adriel, for after her contemptuous behavior towards David, 2 Sam. 6, 23, she had no children, she bore no children to David. V. 9. **And he,** David, **delivered them,** the seven men selected by him, **into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them,** impaled them with extended limbs, **in the hill before the Lord; and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley-harvest,** at the very beginning of the summer in that climate, about the middle of April. V. 10. **And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah,** the mother of two of the hanged men, **took sackcloth,** the usual garment of mourners, **and spread it for her**

upon the rock, to serve as her bed, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, until the falling of rain some time during the summer indicated that the anger of God was appeased, **and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.** This being a case where the bodies were to serve as a sign of expiation, they were not taken down from the stakes in the evening, Deut. 21, 22. Since ravenous birds and beasts were not permitted to come near the bodies, they probably dried out quickly. V. 11. **And it was told David what Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.** V. 12. **And David,** touched by this evidence of a mother's faithfulness and loving care, **went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan, his son, from the men of Jabesh-gilead,** in the country east of Jordan, **which had stolen them from the street,** from the open place near the city gate, where they had been fastened to the wall, 1 Sam. 31, 10—12, **of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa;** v. 13. **and he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan, his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.** V. 14. **And the bones of Saul and Jonathan, his son, buried they,** most likely with those of the seven executed men, **in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulcher of Kish, his father,** not far from Gibeah; **and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land,** He did not permit the famine to continue. Even the lowliest of men are in God's care, and He may punish an entire country for an injustice done to them. It is the duty of the believers, therefore, to help the poor and lowly obtain justice.

Exploits during the Philistine Wars. — V. 15. **Moreover, the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him,** his standing army, his heroes, **and fought against the Philistines; and David waxed faint,** he was overcome with weariness. V. 16. **And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant,** one of the giant race of the Rephaim, to which also Goliath belonged, **the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight,** that is, the brazen head of his lance weighed about eight pounds, **he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.** V. 17. **But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah,** one of David's commanders, **succored him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him,** thus saving the life of David. **Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle,** not take part actively in battle, **that thou quench not the light of Israel,** for so David was regarded by his men, as a symbol of Israel's life in fortune and honor. V. 18. **And it came to pass after this that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob,** probably a small place near Gezer; **then Sibbechai the Hushathite,** a general in the standing army, **slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant,** also a member of the ancient giant race. V. 19. **And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim,** or simply Jair, 1 Chron. 20, 5, **a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.** V. 20. **And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature that had on every hand six fingers and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant,** he was likewise a member of the giant race. V. 21. **And when he defied Israel,** as Goliath had done in the Valley of Elah, 1 Sam. 17, **Jonathan, the son of Shimeah, the brother of David, slew him.** V. 22. **These four were born to the giant in Gath and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants,** for they were killed by the heroes of David while he was their commander in the field. David here appears as an example to all believers, for they all should work while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work.

CHAPTER 22.

David's Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Gratitude for Deliverance in the Past. — V. 1. **And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song,** which is simply another version of Ps. 18, from which it is distinguished only by slight deviations, **in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies and out of the hand of Saul.** V. 2. **And he said, The Lord is my Rock and my Fortress,** in whom he may confidently trust, **and my Deliverer;** v. 3. **the God of my rock,** Deut. 32, 4, with reference to His unchangeable faithfulness; **in Him will I trust. He is my Shield,** covering him against the attacks of his enemies, **and the Horn of my salvation,** yielding help and strength in overcoming the enemies, **my high Tower,** the inaccessible and safe stronghold, **and my Refuge, my Savior; Thou savest me from violence.** This is said of God by way of a general introduction. V. 4. **I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,** or, upon Him whom I praised, who is the Praised One, **I will call; so shall**

I be saved from mine enemies. The application is now made to David's own case. V. 5. **When the waves of death compassed me,** they came upon him from all sides like breakers on the shore of the ocean, **the floods of ungodly men,** the streams of destruction, **made me afraid.** V. 6. **The sorrows of hell compassed me about,** like sudden pangs of pain, or like ropes which threatened to throttle him; **the snares of death prevented me,** fell on him in a treacherous attack, especially during the persecutions of Saul. V. 7. **In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God; and He did hear my voice out of His temple,** out of the palace of His heavenly dwelling, **and my cry did enter into His ears.** The Lord's deliverance is next pictured. V. 8. **Then the earth shook and trembled,** quaking to its very center; **the foundations of heaven moved and shook because He was wroth,** as when a terrible storm, with an accompanying earthquake, sweeps over the earth, sent by the wrath of His indignation. V. 9. **There went up a smoke out of His nostrils,** the snorting being a sign of His anger, **and fire out of His mouth devoured,** like a fire ready to consume everything that comes into its path; **coals were kindled by it,** glowing coals burned out of Him. The picture is that of the rising of a storm-cloud and the flaming of the sheet-lightning which announces the storm. V. 10. **He bowed the heavens also,** for the lowering storm-clouds seem to draw the heaven down to the earth, **and came down; and darkness was under His feet,** a symbol of the terror struck by God's wrath, as He hides His face in darkness. V. 11. **And He rode upon a cherub,** as a bearer of the divine majesty and glory, **and did fly; and He was seen upon the wings of the wind,** as the bearers of the appearance of His glory. V. 12. **And He made darkness pavilions round about Him,** like the tabernacles in which He made His habitation, **dark waters and thick clouds of the skies,** they served as the booths in which He was hidden. V. 13. **Through the brightness before Him were coals of fire kindled,** glowing forth from the intense gloom like live coals. V. 14. **The Lord thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice,** God's wrathful judgment, as that of the all-powerful, unapproachable Judge, burst forth upon the enemies. V. 15. **And He sent out arrows and scattered them,** shafts of lightning, like a warrior armed with bow and arrow; **lightning, and discomfited them,** all this tending toward the complete destruction of the enemy. V. 16. **And the channels of the sea appeared,** the very beds of the ocean becoming visible, **the foundations of the world were discovered,** laid bare by the terrible storm and the earthquake, **at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils,** at the noise of His angry crashes of thunder. V. 17. **He sent from above, He took me,** stretching out His hand from heaven to the very abyss, in order to save the drowning man; **He drew me out of many waters.** V. 18. **He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me,** Saul being thought of as the principal one; **for they were too strong for me,** they were able to overpower him without the help of God. V. 19. **They prevented me in the day of my calamity,** falling upon him in a sudden attack; **but the Lord was my Stay.** V. 20. **He brought me forth also into a large place,** setting him free from all narrowness and straits, procuring for him a condition of freedom; **He delivered me because He delighted in me,** loving him because of his integrity which flowed from his faith in the God of his salvation. In a similar manner every believer praises his God, who was so often his Help and his Stay, delivering him in the midst of danger, distress, and death.

PRAISE AND PROPHECY. — V. 21. **The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me.** The righteousness of the heart is seen in the purity of the acts of his hands, in their abstaining from sin and unrighteousness. V. 22. **For I have kept the ways of the Lord,** observing the rules of conduct laid down in His Law, **and have not wickedly departed from my God,** not fallen away from God through wickedness. V. 23. **For all His judgments were before me,** the instructions to which He obligated all men; **and as for His statutes,** the precepts of His covenant, **I did not depart from them,** he was a sincere believer in, and follower of, Jehovah. V. 24. **I was also upright before Him,** that was his immediate, inner relation to God, **and have kept myself from mine iniquity,** guarding himself against committing sin, and so contracting guilt. This testimony of David concerning himself agrees with that of the Lord, 1 Kings 14, 8; 15, 5. V. 25. **Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in His eyesight,** rewarding every believer in accordance with the evidence presented in his life and works. V. 26. **With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful, and with the upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright.** V. 27. **With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure, and with the froward,** the perverse, **Thou wilt show Thyself unsavory,** every man thus reaping as he sowed, being rewarded or punished according to his deeds. V. 28. **And the afflicted people Thou wilt save,** those bowed down by a weight of misery; **but Thine eyes are upon the haughty,** those who look down upon and oppress the poor and afflicted, **that Thou mayest bring them down.** Cp. Luke 1, 52. V. 29.

For Thou art my Lamp, O Lord, as the Source of all his joy and good fortune; **and the Lord will lighten my darkness,** by taking away all affliction, wretchedness, and ruin. V. 30. **For by Thee I have run through a troop,** running against the hostile forces and trampling them under foot; **by my God have I leaped over a wall,** conquering fortified places with ease. V. 31. **As for God, His way is perfect,** He is altogether blameless in His government; **the Word of the Lord is tried,** without guile, pure, and true; **He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him,** offering protection against all dangers. V. 32. **For who is God save the Lord?** He is the only true God. **And who is a rock save our God?** He only may be relied upon absolutely as trustworthy. V. 33. **God is my Strength and Power,** a Fortress of strength; **and He maketh my way perfect,** leading and guiding the perfect man on his way. V. 34. **He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,** swift in strength and in the pursuit of the enemies; **and setteth me upon my high places,** which the singer victoriously holds against his enemies. V. 35. **He teacheth my hands to war,** and thus to hold their own against the enemies, **so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms,** so that his arms are able to bend the bronze bow without difficulty. V. 36. **Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation,** whereby God protects and saves His people; **and Thy gentleness hath made me great,** by the favorable hearing of his prayer. V. 37. **Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,** giving to the wanderer a wide space for free movement, **so that my feet did not slip,** his ankles standing unwavering and firm; he was able to move with a light and strong step. V. 38. **I have pursued mine enemies and destroyed them, and turned not again until I had consumed them;** they could not rise for further contest; they fell under his feet in helpless submission. V. 39. **And I have consumed them and wounded them that they could not arise; yea, they are fallen under my feet.** V. 40. **For Thou hast girded me with strength to battle,** all his strength and prowess came from Jehovah; **them that rose up against me hast Thou subdued under me,** they had to bow down their necks like helpless slaves. V. 41. **Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies,** causing them to turn their back in flight, **that I might destroy them that hate me.** V. 42. **They looked, but there was none to save; even to the Lord, but He answered them not.** Though in their extreme need they cried to the God of Israel for help, they received no deliverance at His hands. V. 43. **Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth,** rubbing, pulverizing, and scattering them; **I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad,** contemptuously scorning and throwing them away as worthless. The result of this victorious conflict with the enemies is also pictured. V. 44. **Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people,** from the insurrections in the midst of his own nation; **Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen,** of all the surrounding nations; **a people which I knew not shall serve me.** Here the Messianic thought is included, that eventually even those outside of the chosen people of the Lord would learn to know the true God in Christ Jesus. V. 45. **Strangers shall submit themselves unto me,** strange, foreign people would pay fawning, hypocritical homage, since they felt powerless before the Lord's king; **as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.** V. 46. **Strangers shall fade away,** wither and shrivel up like a leaf in a hot wind, **and they shall be afraid out of their close places,** coming forth hobbling and trembling out of their fortresses. V. 47. **The Lord liveth; and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.** These sentences return to the thought of the introduction, which dominated the entire psalm. V. 48. **It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,** subjecting the nations to his rule, v. 49. **and that bringeth me forth from mine enemies,** delivering him from their power. **Thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me; Thou hast delivered me from the violent man,** saving him from the persecution of Saul, as of the man of violent deeds, and from all those that followed the latter in his hatred. V. 50. **Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto Thy name,** as being expressive of all His deeds of deliverance, by which He has revealed Himself as the true God. V. 51. **He is the Tower of Salvation for His king,** with the strong assurance of salvation, **and showeth mercy to His anointed, unto David, and to his seed forevermore,** the Messianic thought recurring here once more. Christ, the true Anointed of God, carried the Lord's cause to a still more victorious conclusion. He is the Head and King over all nations, over the spiritual Israel, the seed of Abraham gathered from all nations of the world.

CHAPTER 23.

The Last Words of David. Catalog of His Heroes.

DAVID'S LAST PROPHETIC SONG. — V. 1. **Now, these be the last words of David. David, the son of Jesse, said,** he uttered a divine, oracular saying based on immediate inspiration, **and the man who was raised up on high,** from his lowly position as the son of a shepherd, **the anointed of the God of Jacob,** who had the royal dignity conferred on him by God, **and the sweet psalmist of Israel,** he who was pleasant in the praise-songs of Israel, **said,** all in the power of the Holy Spirit, v. 2. **The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,** using him as His instrument to convey the divine truths to men, in his writings and psalms, **and His Word was in my tongue,** for the Spirit acts through the Word. V. 3. **The God of Israel said,** He who chose Israel for His possession, **the Rock of Israel spake to me,** He who is unchangeable, faithful, and trustworthy, **He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God,** literally, "a ruler over men just, a ruler in the fear of God" (there will be), that is, such a Ruler would arise whose rule would be exercised in the fear of God. V. 4. **And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.** The picture is that of a cloudless, beautiful morning after a night of rain, when all the plants, refreshed with moisture, respond to the coaxing warmth of the sunlight. That is the character of the Messianic period, such are the conditions following the coming of the promised King. V. 5. **Although my house be not so with God** (the sentence is a question, like chap. 7, 18, expressing David's surprise over the goodness of God which was shown to his family), **yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure,** chap. 7, 12 ff., the declaration of God ordering and arranging all things beyond the possibility of overthrow; **for this is all my salvation and all my desire,** the salvation promised by God being a constant source of pleasure to David, **although He make it not to grow,** literally, "Should He not make it sprout?" Messiah would surely be a righteous Branch, who would reign and prosper, Jer. 23, 5; 33, 15. The contrast between this excellent condition and the judgment upon the ungodly is now brought out. V. 6. **But the sons of Belial,** the godless, vain, and worthless scoundrels, **shall be all of them as thorns thrust away because they cannot be taken with hands,** they are so hurtful and dangerous that one does not take his bare hands to handle them, but uses tools; v. 7. **but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear, in order to avoid all contact with them; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place,** so that there will be an end to them. The reference is to the final judgment upon the godless and unbelievers, Matt. 13, 30. Note: The first part of this prophecy is fulfilled. The wonderful grace of God in Christ Jesus has appeared to all men, the dawn of the Messianic day has come. All believers enjoy the light and the warmth of the grace of Jesus Christ, both in life and in death, and therefore bring forth, as long as they live, fruits of righteousness, to the honor and praise of God.

LIST OF DAVID'S HEROES. — V. 8. **These be the names of the mighty men,** the heroes, **whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains,** he belonged to the family of Hachmon, 1 Chron. 27, 32, and his name was Jashobeam, the most distinguished of the king's guard, the most eminent of the three greatest heroes. **The same was Adino the Eznite; he lifted up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.** That was the greatest feat of this hero. V. 9. **And after him,** next in the list, **was Eleazar, the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away,** when they had marched against the Philistines, to meet them in battle. V. 10. **He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword,** cramped around the sword-hilt from excessive weariness; **and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people,** who had apparently fallen back, **returned after him only to spoil.** V. 11. **And after him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop,** at Lehi or Ramath-lehi, **where was a piece of ground full of lentils; and the people fled from the Philistines.** V. 12. **But he stood in the midst of the ground,** determined to hold it against the enemy, **and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord wrought a great victory,** for this was His gift. V. 13. **And three of the thirty chief,** of the knights of David, **went down, and came to David in the harvest time, unto the cave of Adullam,** 1 Sam. 22, 1; **and the troop of the Philistines,** a plundering party, **pitched in the Valley of Rephaim,** 1 Sam. 5, 18. V. 14. **And David was then in an hold,** in a mountain stronghold, **and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem,** their camp was near Bethlehem. V. 15. **And David longed,** he had a strong desire, **and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!** The water of this well, which David had so often tasted as

a lad, was exceptionally good, and he longed for it with the desire of home-sickness. V. 16. **And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines,** thrusting aside the enemies who tried to hinder their passage, **and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate,** some little distance outside, **and took it, and brought it to David. Nevertheless, he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord,** as a drink-offering to Jehovah, to whom alone it ought to belong. V. 17. **And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this,** namely, drink the water thus obtained. **Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?** They had brought it at the price of their lives, at the risk of their souls, and therefore it had the value of their blood, it was too precious to drink. **Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.** V. 18. **And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah,** was chief among three, also distinguished for exceptional feats of valor. **And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, brandishing it in battle, and slew them, and had the name among three.** V. 19. **Was he not most honorable of three,** among all the knights of David? **Therefore he was their captain,** becoming their leader; **howbeit, he attained not unto the first three,** the heroes whose exploits were described above. V. 20. **And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the priest,** who was captain of David's body-guard, chap. 8, 18; 20, 23, **the son of a valiant,** or honorable, honest, **man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts,** having many feats to his credit; **he slew two lionlike men of Moab,** two famous Moabite heroes; **he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow,** when the lion, searching for food, had fallen into a cistern or into a trap set for him. V. 21. **And he slew an Egyptian,** a certain well-known enemy, **a goodly man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand,** showing both bravery and skill in snatching the weapon out of the enemy's hand, **and slew him with his own spear.** V. 22. **These things did Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men,** among the heroes of David. V. 23. **He was more honorable than the thirty,** honored above the other knights, **but he attained not to the first three. And David set him over his guard,** chap. 8, 18; 20, 23. V. 24. **Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the thirty,** a member of the corps of David's knights, chap. 2, 18; **Elhanan, the son of Dodo of Bethlehem;** v. 25. **Shammah the Harodite; Elika the Harodite;** v. 26. **Helez the Paltite; Ira, the son of Ikkesh, the Tekoite;** v. 27. **Abiezer the Anethothite; Mebunnai the Hushathite;** v. 28. **Zalmon the Ahohite; Maharai the Netophathite;** v. 29. **Heleb, the son of Baanah, a Netophathite; Ittai, the son of Ribai, out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin;** v. 30. **Benaiah the Pirathonite; Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash;** v. 31. **Abialbon the Arbathite; Azmaveth the Barhumite;** v. 32. **Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan;** v. 33. **Shammah the Hararite; Ahiam, the son of Sharar, the Hararite;** v. 34. **Eliphelet, the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite; Eliam, the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite;** v. 35. **Hezrai the Carmelite; Paarai the Arbite;** v. 36. **Igal, the son of Nathan of Zobah; Bani the Gadite;** v. 37. **Zelek the Ammonite; Nahari the Beerothite, armor-bearer to Joab, the son of Zeruiah;** v. 38. **Ira, an Ithrite; Gareb, an Ithrite;** v. 39. **Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all,** namely, Joab as the commander-in-chief, three heroes of the first degree, three heroes of the second degree, and the thirty knights of David. As the names of these faithful followers of David were here entered into the catalog of heroes, so the names of the true servants of Christ are entered into the book of life, to be read on the last day, when all such men will receive the reward of mercy.

CHAPTER 24.

The Numbering of the People and the Plague.

The People Numbered. — V. 1. **And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,** as in the former famine, chap. 21, 1—14, **and He moved David against them,** namely, the members of the nation, by giving Satan leeway to tempt David, **to say, Go, number Israel and Judah,** by taking a census chiefly for military purposes. V. 2. **For the king said to Joab, the captain of the host, which was with him,** having held his post as commander-in-chief of the army, **Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba,** from the extreme north to the extreme south end of the land, **and number ye the people that I may know the number of the people,** really get the exact statistics of the country's military strength. V. 3. **And Joab said unto the king, Now the Lord, thy God, add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it! But why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?** Joab noticed that the pride of the king was his

motive for instituting this census, that he wanted to boast of the imposing and growing military strength of his people, and he feared that no good would come of it, especially since the people themselves might resent the procedure. Joab's native shrewdness here stood him in good stead. V. 4. **Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab,** his sinful exaltation insisted upon having his command carried out, **and against the captains of the host,** for the practical sense of the latter had caused them to side with Joab. **And Joab and the captains of the host,** without further opposition. **went out from the presence of the king,** before his very eyes, **to number the people of Israel.** V. 5. **And they passed over Jordan,** in order to begin the census in the southeastern part of the country, in the territory of Reuben, **and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that lieth in the midst of the river,** that is, the valley, **of Gad, and toward Jazer,** preferring to camp in the open on account of the large numbers of people who had to be summoned to be enrolled in the census lists. V. 6. **Then they came to Gilead,** the hill country along the Jabbok, **and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi,** probably a lower section of the east-Jordan country, which had but recently been settled; **and they came to Danjaan,** in Northern Perea, southwest of Damascus, **and about to Zidon,** as they turned to the west across the foothills of the Lebanon, v. 7. **and came to the stronghold of Tyre,** still a Phenician city, **and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites,** for here the heathen nations had never been fully exterminated, and the mixed population of Galilee was notorious even in Old Testament times; **and they went out to the south of Judah, even to Beersheba,** omitting Benjamin, however, and not including the Levites, 1 Chron. 21, 6. V. 8. **So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days,** the census not being really finished, because wrath came upon Israel and caused the suspension of the project. V. 9. **And Joab gave up,** reported, **the sum of the number of the people unto the king; and there were in Israel,** in the northern tribes, **eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.** These were round numbers, and the statement in Chronicles, 1 Chron. 21, 5, includes either the standing army or the heathen proselytes. So David had yielded to the temptation of pride, an abomination to God, even as murder and adultery. Every believer must guard against this sin with all earnestness, lest it become a snare to him.

THE PESTILENCE. — V. 10. **And David's heart smote him,** his conscience began to bother him, **after that he had numbered the people,** while the census was still being taken. **And David,** becoming conscious of the sinfulness of his act, **said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done,** the offense of his pride was directed against the Lord; **and now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Thy servant,** the guilt which he had loaded upon himself by his transgression; **for I have done very foolishly.** It was a short penitential prayer, which he apparently sent up to God during a sleepless night. V. 11. **For when David was up in the morning,** rather, when David got up in the morning, **the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer,** his confidential counselor, who had evidently taken the place of Nathan, **saying,** v. 12. **Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord,** in giving David his choice of three punishments, **I offer thee three things,** one of which would surely be laid upon him; **choose thee one of them that I may do it unto thee.** V. 13. **So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him,** naming the three forms of punishment selected by the Lord, **Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? Now advise and see what answer I shall return to Him that sent me;** the choice must be made at once. V. 14. **And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait,** in great fear and anguish. **Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.** The first two plagues would have made David and his people dependent upon men, and he knew from experience that little favor might be expected there; the pestilence, however, was an immediate stroke of God's hand, and here he hoped for mercy, whence he might sooner hope to draw comfort and help. V. 15. **So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed,** which even now was fixed by the gracious will of God; **and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men,** the entire people having deserved this punishment by various misdeeds, especially by the rebellions instituted under Absalom and Sheba. V. 16. **And when the angel,** God's messenger of destruction, **stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented Him of the evil,** this being the moment of the appointed time, **and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough; stay now thine hand.** As yet the scourge had not struck Jerusalem. **And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite,** northeast of Zion, on the summit of Moriah. V. 17. **And David spake unto the Lord when he**

saw the angel that smote the people, for the Lord opened his eyes and made the invisible visible to him, **and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly,** upon him alone the blame really rested; **but these sheep,** the members of his people, **what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me and against my father's house.** He begged the Lord to visit the judgment upon him and his family, but to spare the people, whom he considered innocent. V. 18. **And Gad came that day to David and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.** Thus the Lord's instructions were carried out, 1 Chron. 21, 18. V. 19. **And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.** V. 20. **And Araunah,** who was busy threshing wheat, **looked,** bending forward to look more clearly in the distance, **and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out,** from the enclosure of the threshing-floor, **and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground,** rendering due honor to the king. V. 21 **And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.** V. 22. **And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take, as a present, and offer up what seemeth good unto him,** for Araunah was just as anxious as David to have the plague stopped. **Behold, here be oxen,** those used by him on the floor, **for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments,** the threshing-sledges, which consisted of several iron-pointed rollers which were held together by a chain, **and other instruments of the oxen,** such as their yoke, **for wood.** V. 23. **All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king.** These words are a continuation of his speech: All this gives Araunah, O king, to the king. **And Araunah,** after a pause, **said unto the king, The Lord, thy God, accept thee,** look with favor upon the sacrifice and prayer now to be made. V. 24. **And the king,** unwilling to accept the offer thus made, **said unto Araunah, Nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord, my God, of that which doth cost me nothing,** he felt that he could not properly, at this time, devote anything to Jehovah which he himself had gotten as a present. **So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver** (about thirty dollars). This was apparently the price of the oxen only, since the land was worth more, 1 Chron. 21, 25. V. 25. **And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings,** the latter for the purpose of reestablishing the proper relation between him and the covenant God. **So the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.** At the same time the command to build an altar to the Lord included a hint that this place had been chosen by the Lord for the Temple to His name. We Christians of the New Testament have a far better atoning sacrifice, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which cleanses us from all sins and keeps the plague of death and hell from us.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

INTRODUCTION.

The Books of the Kings, like those of Samuel, formed but one account in the original Hebrew collection, the division into two parts being made at the time when the Old Testament was translated into Greek. As their name indicates, the books contain a history of the people of God under the kings of the Jews, beginning with Solomon and ending with the Babylonian exile. But these books do not give us a history of kings such as mere human accounts furnish. "Like all historical books of the Bible, they are not intended merely as a source of historical information, but were written chiefly for religious purposes." The writer points out again and again how God fulfilled His promise to David, His servant, namely, that He would always keep a man from his house and lineage on the royal throne. Again, he invariably tells us, in a practically stereotyped formula, whether the reign of a king was good or evil "in the sight of the Lord." Moreover, he describes in great detail the labors of the prophets of the Lord, particularly the ministry of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha. And, finally, the fact that the author wrote from a religious standpoint appears also from the fact that he shows the division of the kingdom, the overthrow of Israel, the Northern Kingdom of the ten tribes, and the Babylonian captivity of Judah, the Southern Kingdom of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, to have been the inevitable consequence and punishment of the idolatry and other sins of the people; and thus his history shows the ruin

to which sin invariably leads if not repented of, but persisted in.

The style, language, and the plan of the books preclude the idea of a compilation or of divided authorship. It is true that the author made use of several compends of history, such as the Book of the Acts of Solomon, 1 Kings 11, 41, the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, 1 Kings 14, 19, and elsewhere, and the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, 1 Kings 14, 29, and elsewhere, but it was under the guidance of the Spirit of God that he chose from these prophetic documents such information as he needed for his purpose. The unknown author seems to have lived among the captive Jews in Babylon, and he wrote his book about 560 B. C.

The contents of the Books of Kings may be summarized as follows: 1. The reign of Solomon, 1 Kings 1—11; 2. the history of the divided kingdom until the fall of the Northern Kingdom, 1 Kings 12—2 Kings 17; 3. the Kingdom of Judah till the Babylonian captivity, 2 Kings 18—25.[1])

1) Cp. *Concordia Bible Class*, March, 1919, 41—44; Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 32—35.

CHAPTER 1.

Solomon's Accession to the Throne.

Adonijah Attempts to Seize the Kingdom. V. 1. **Now, King David was old and stricken in years**, advanced in days, being about seventy years old at that time; **and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.** The extraordinary cares and overexertions of his earlier years had sapped his strength and weakened his resistance, so that his blood no longer had the power to warm him; his vital powers were so chilled and enfeebled that the thickest of covers did not give him warmth. V. 2. **Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin**, literally, "a young woman, a virgin," **and let her stand before the king**, as a servant and nurse, **and let her cherish him**, be his constant attendant, **and let her lie in thy bosom**, this manner of warming chilled and enfeebled bodies by contact with young, vigorous, full-blooded bodies being advocated in ancient times, **that my lord the king may get heat.** This was the only object of this arrangement, which must be looked upon from the standpoint of the time, when polygamy, especially in the case of kings, was altogether in order. V. 3. **So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag, a Shunammite**, of Shunem, a city in the Plain of Jezreel, near the foot of the Little Hermon, **and brought her to the king**, her relation to him being looked upon as that of a wife. V. 4. **And the damsel was very fair**, exceedingly beautiful, **and cherished the king**, she was his nurse and attendant, and ministered to him; **but the king knew her not**, did not enter into the usual marital relations with her. This remark serves to make clear how it was possible afterwards for Adonijah to seek Abishag for his wife. V. 5. **Then Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself, saying, I will be king.** Amnon having been murdered, Chileab, or Daniel, having apparently died in childhood, and Absalom having perished in the insurrection begun by him, Adonijah believed himself to be the rightful claimant to the throne. **And he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him**, to be his body-guard, all in an overexaltation which did not become him. Cp. 2 Sam. 16, 1. V. 6. **And his father had not displeased him at any time**, had never rebuked him for this show of ambition during his whole life, this being another indication of David's weakness toward his children, **in saying, Why hast thou done so?** This indulgence had encouraged Adonijah very considerably. **And he also was a very goodly man**, very handsome in appearance and bearing; **and his mother bare him after Absalom**, after the latter had been born of Maachah. V. 7. **And he conferred with Joab, the son of Zeruiah**, in order to win over the army through its commander-in-chief, **and with Abiathar, the priest**, the high priest who was stationed at Jerusalem; **and they, following Adonijah, helped him**, the latter probably out of jealousy on account of Zadok's position. V. 8. **But Zadok, the priest**, the high priest, stationed at Gibeon, 1 Chron. 16, 39, **and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada**, the captain of the king's body-guard, **and Nathan, the prophet, and Shimei**, chap. 4, 18, **and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David**, the corps of David's heroes, 2 Sam. 23, 8. 9, **were not with Adonijah.** V. 9. **And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle**, in preparing a great sacrificial feast, **by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel**, a well southeast of Jerusalem, at the junction of the Valley of Hinnom with that of Jehoshaphat, **and called all his brethren, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants**, all those who had positions at court; v. 10. **but Nathan, the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men**, whom he had not been able to interest, **and Solomon, his brother, he called not**, he purposely omitted him from the invitation, since he was informed of David's plans for his successor, and his design was to render null the purpose of his father and to possess himself of the throne. V. 11. **Wherefore Nathan,**

who wanted to prevent a repetition of the history of Absalom, spake unto Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, doth reign, that he had practically usurped the royal power, and David, our lord, knoweth it not? David was, for obvious reasons, ignorant of the plans of Adonijah. V. 12. Now, therefore, come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life and the life of thy son Solomon, for according to Oriental custom the opposing pretenders to the crown, together with their nearest relatives, were put to death by him who forcibly seized the throne. V. 13. Go and get thee in unto King David, with whom she, his favorite wife, still had great influence, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon, thy son, shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why, then, doth Adonijah reign? The plan was to arouse David's mind to the danger of the situation. V. 14. Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, to follow up the effect of the first announcement, and confirm thy words, by making the same statements and thus inciting the king to action. V. 15. And Bathsheba went in unto the king, into the chamber, for the aged king could no longer leave his apartments; and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king, who needed constant nursing and attention. V. 16. And Bathsheba bowed and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? literally, "What to thee?" What bothers or worries thee? V. 17. And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the Lord, thy God, unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon, thy son, shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. V. 18. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth, he was even now usurping the royal authority; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not. Note the vividness of Bathsheba's speech. V. 19. And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, invited them to a sacrificial meal, and Abiathar, the priest, and Joab, the captain of the host; but Solomon, thy servant, hath he not called. V. 20. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, the decision rested with David alone, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him, they were all anxiously awaiting an official declaration. V. 21. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, in the sleep awaiting the great day of resurrection, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders, treated as traitors and offenders guilty of death for having aspired to the throne unlawfully. V. 22. And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan, the prophet, who had carefully watched his opportunity, also came in. V. 23. And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan, the prophet; his name was announced to the king. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground, while Bathsheba retired from the king's presence. V. 24. And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? It was a direct challenge, which conveyed a slight reproach to David. V. 25. For he is gone down this day and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, of the regular army, and Abiathar, the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him and say, God save King Adonijah! literally, "May King Adonijah live!" V. 26. But me, even me, thy servant, and Zadok, the priest, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon hath he not called. Every movement of Adonijah showed his hostile sentiment toward the friends of the king. V. 27. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed it unto thy servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? It was not wounded vanity which was here speaking, but honest doubt, which was sure that the king would not have sanctioned such a move in secret. Note: In the kingdom of Christ also men arise who would usurp the rule of Christ, false Christs, false prophets; and it is a sad fact that so many who call themselves Christians yield to their blandishments and forsake the truth of the Gospel.

Solomon Anointed King. — V. 28. Then King David, now thoroughly aroused to the danger of the situation, answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence and stood before the king, awaiting his pleasure. V. 29. And the king sware, with a very solemn oath, and said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, giving David evidence of His mercy and truth in so many great dangers, for which reason this word of praise was all the more appropriate, v. 30. even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon, thy son, shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead, even so will I certainly do this day. He was evidently deeply moved, and saw the necessity for quick and decisive action. V. 31. Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord, King David, live forever. It was an expression of her heartfelt

gratitude. V. 32. **And King David said, Call me Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet,** who had also retired from the king's presence after his interview, **and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.** David now showed that he was still strong in mind and will in spite of his bodily weakness. V. 33. **The king also said unto them,** they were to act as his representatives in the matter which he had in mind, **Take with you the servants of your lord,** the king's own body-guard, **and cause Solomon, my son, to ride upon mine own mule,** this being an actual declaration that the latter was king, **and bring him down to Gihon,** a place west of Jerusalem, with a spring of water which fed two reservoirs, v. 34. **and let Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel,** the investiture being emphasized as taking place by divine right; **and blow ye with the trumpet,** as was done on solemn occasions, **and say, God save King Solomon!** V. 35. **Then ye shall come up after him,** in a procession befitting the importance of the occasion, **that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah,** over the united nation, as David had twice consolidated the tribes. V. 36. **And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada,** upon whom rested the responsibility for the outward arrangements, **answered the king and said, Amen; the Lord God of my lord the king say so too,** a prayer that God might permanently establish the throne of Solomon as the successor of David. V. 37. **As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be He with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord, King David,** since this growth and establishment depended upon the gracious blessing of Jehovah. V. 38. **So Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites,** the body-guard of the king, **went down,** according to David's command, **and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.** V. 39. **And Zadok, the priest, took an horn of oil out of the Tabernacle,** for the oil of holy ointment was kept in the tent in which the Ark of the Covenant was stationed, **and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save King Solomon!** V. 40. **And all the people came up after him,** full of happiness over David's decision, **and the people piped with pipes,** flutes being used on festival occasions, **and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent,** resounding mightily, **with the sound of them.** The anointing of Solomon is a type of the anointing of that greater Son of David, Jesus Christ, whom the Lord has set as His King on His holy hill Zion.

Adonijah's Life Spared. — V. 41. **And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating,** for the noise sounded down from Zion as far as their place of assembly. **And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said,** knowing the significance of its signals, **Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?** What is the meaning of this sound of warlike noises? V. 42. **And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, the priest, came; and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant,** reliable, **man and bringest good tidings.** He had been left behind in the city to serve as messenger, to bring the report of anything which he might observe. V. 43. **And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily,** literally, "true indeed," but **our lord, King David, hath made Solomon king.** V. 44. **And the king hath sent with him Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule;** v. 45. **and Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, have anointed him king in Gihon; and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again,** with joyful excitement. **This is the noise that ye have heard.** V. 46. **And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom,** established and accepted as rightful king. V. 47. **And moreover, the king's servants,** represented by Benaiah, **came to bless our lord, King David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed,** he arose from his lying posture and bent forward as far as he could, in an attitude of prayer. V. 48. **And also thus said the king, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.** Cp. Gen. 47, 31. V. 49. **And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid,** every added statement served to make their messenger's report more unwelcome to the conspirators, **and rose up, and went every man his way.** V. 50. **And Adonijah,** the chief conspirator, **feared because of Solomon, and arose,** having been abandoned by his panic-stricken followers, **and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar,** for this was considered a place of refuge, since his action signified that he appealed to the pardoning power and grace of Jehovah. V. 51. **And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth King Solomon; for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let King Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.** He was in a panic lest he receive the reward of his transgression.

V. 52. **And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man,** honorable and trustworthy, **there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth,** he would not be harmed; **but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die,** another crime of a similar nature would cost him his life. V. 53. **So King Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar.** "Solomon regarded Adonijah's flight to the horns of the altar as a confession of his guilt and repentance, and he exercised an act of clemency which could only produce the most favorable impression upon the people." (Lange.) **And he came and bowed himself to King Solomon,** acknowledging him as rightful king; **and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.** He was granted life and freedom. Note: All those who have left the kingdom of Christ, but return to Him while the time of grace is still upon them, will not be cast out by Him; for with Him there is mercy and forgiveness.

CHAPTER 2.

The First Acts of Solomon's Reign.

The Death of David. — V. 1. **Now, the days of David drew nigh that he should die;** he felt that death was approaching rapidly; **and he charged Solomon, his son,** v. 2. **I go the way of all the earth,** walking on the way which led to death, Josh. 23, 14; 1, 7. **Be thou strong therefore and show thyself a man,** a true watchman in the service of Jehovah; v. 3. **and keep the charge of the Lord, thy God,** that which was entrusted to him in his kingly office, that he might perform it, **to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies,** the sum total of the Law in all its different aspects, in its various relations to men, whether this had special reference to the children of Israel or not, **as it is written in the Law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper,** be skilful, use wise care, **in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself,** performing all things in such a manner as to have the approval of Jehovah and therefore be a partaker of true prosperity; v. 4. **that the Lord may continue His word which He spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way to walk before Me in truth,** in faithful adherence to His covenant, **with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee,** shall not be cut off to thee, **(said He) a man on the throne of Israel.** The Messianic promise 2 Sam. 7, 12. 13 implied, of course, an unbroken succession of descendants of David, through whom the family of David might be continued. The posterity of David was not to be exterminated, for it was a branch out of his root who was to be the Messiah of the world. V. 5. **Moreover, thou knowest also what Joab, the son of Zeruiah, did to me,** since he, with his strange influence in Israel, often acted counter to the wishes of the king, **and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner, the son of Ner, and unto Amasa, the son of Jether, whom he slew,** in wilful and malicious murder, **and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins,** 2 Sam. 3, 27. 28; 20, 8. 9, **and in his shoes that were on his feet,** these articles of apparel being named as those of a warrior, the former serving to hold up the sheath of the sword, the latter for marching. Joab had soiled with innocent blood the very insignia of his rank and dignity as general and soldier. V. 6. **Do therefore according to thy wisdom,** in choosing the right moment when Joab might give occasion, **and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace,** to punish him for his blood-guiltiness in such a manner as not to provoke murmuring on the part of the people. V. 7. **But show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite,** Chimham being even now one of those enjoying the bounty of the king, 2 Sam. 19, 40, **and let them be of those that eat at thy table; for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom, thy brother,** 2 Sam. 17, 27. V. 8. **And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, the son of Gerah,** a man connected with the same occasion, 2 Sam. 16, 5. 6; 19, 21, **a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse,** with a heinous and horrible malediction, **in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the Lord,** 2 Sam. 19, 23, **saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.** He had forgiven the insult to his person, but the disgrace heaped upon the royal office must be avenged. V. 9. **Now, therefore, hold him not guiltless,** he had a duty to perform as king and judge and as representative of the divine right; **for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.** Punishment must be visited upon him, only the time and manner of inflicting it was left to Solomon's discretion. V. 10. **So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David,** in the the city of Zion. V. 11. **And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years,** in round numbers; **seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.**

Thus the believers, having finished their course, fall asleep in peace and join the number of those that are in the presence of the Lord.

Adonijah Forfeits His Life. — V. 12. **Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David, his father,** having been acknowledged by a second anointing, which took place in the presence of all the representatives of the people; **and his kingdom was established greatly,** confirmed in a manner which caused all his enemies to abandon hope against him. V. 13. **And Adonijah, the son of Haggith,** who had by no means abandoned his intention of possessing the kingdom, **came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon,** hoping to reach his object through the influence of this woman. **And she said, Comest thou peaceably?** Past experience had made her cautious. **And he said, Peaceably,** feigning friendship and concealing his real purpose throughout. V. 14. **He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee,** thus flattering her by asking her advice and making her his unwitting ally. **And she said, Say on.** V. 15. **And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me,** a rather daring assertion, **that I should reign; howbeit, the kingdom is turned about and is become my brother's; for it was his from the Lord.** He proceeded from the assumption that he, as the eldest living prince, would have been the logical successor of David, but shrewdly covered his intention by the pious remark that the present state of affairs was due to Jehovah's disposition of matters. V. 16. **And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not,** literally, "Turn not away my face," namely, in an unwilling refusal. **And she said unto him, Say on.** V. 17. **And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,** this probability being the basis of his entire plan,) **that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife,** the plea being, of course, that he honestly loved her. V. 18. **And Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.** She may have thought that the discontent of Adonijah would be removed by the granting of this request, and the kingdom thus made more secure for her son. V. 19. **Bathsheba therefore went unto King Solomon to speak unto him for Adonijah,** to prefer Adonijah's request. **And the king,** mindful of the reverence due to parents according to the Fourth Commandment, **rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.** This was a very high distinction, and Solomon's conduct might well be emulated by young people in our days, who have apparently forgotten what honoring of their parents requires of them. V. 20. **Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay.** She evidently thought only of the love-affair in the matter, the political aspect having entirely escaped her. **And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother; for I will not say thee nay.** A small favor he was willing to grant in advance. V. 21. **And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah, thy brother, to wife.** Bathsheba overlooked the fact that he who took one of the king's wives thereby put in a claim to the throne; for Abishag was a member of David's harem, being looked on by the entire nation as David's last wife, even if he had not known her. V. 22. **And King Solomon,** who immediately saw through the intrigue of Adonijah and was fully aware of the consequences, **answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother,** who might base his claim on that fact; **even for him and for Abiathar, the priest, and for Joab, the son of Zeruiah,** the two men who had sided with Adonijah in his rebellion. V. 23. **Then King Solomon,** upon whom it now dawned that Adonijah had tried to use his mother as his tool, **sware by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.** The meaning of the oath is that the continual punishment of God should strike him, if he did not carry out the death-sentence upon Adonijah for this trickery on his part. V. 24. **Now, therefore, as the Lord liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David, my father, and who hath made me an house,** given him a son and thus established his family, **as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day,** having forfeited his life by this new attempt against the king. V. 25. **And King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died,** he carried out the sentence of execution. If men, after having repented and received forgiveness of sins, deliberately and maliciously fall back into their former transgressions, they must expect to be punished for all their crimes.

The End of Joab. — V. 26. **And unto Abiathar, the priest, said the king,** in deposing him and his family from office, **Get thee to Anathoth,** a priests' town in the tribe of Benjamin, some five miles northeast of Jerusalem, **unto thine own fields,** for he had possessions there; **for thou art worthy of death,** as a conspirator against the king; **but I will not at this time put thee to death because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David, my father,** 1 Sam. 23, 6; 2 Sam. 15, 24. 29, **and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted,** both during the persecution of Saul and during the rebellion of Absalom. V. 27. **So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord, that he might**

fulfil the word of the Lord which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh, from whom Abiathar was, through Ithamar, descended. The office of the high priest, from this time forth, passed over to the house of Eleazar, to which Zadok belonged. If a servant of the Word becomes guilty of flagrant transgressions of God's holy Law, he becomes unworthy of the holy office. V. 28. **Then tidings came to Joab,** he received news of the execution of Adonijah and of the deposition of Abiathar; **for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord,** probably the tent of David on Mount Zion, **and caught hold on the horns of the altar,** the altar being considered a place of refuge, chap. 1, 50. V. 29. **And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada,** the official executioner, **saying, Go, fall upon him.** V. 30. **And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth.** He did not like to perform the execution in the sanctuary. **And he, Joab, said, Nay; but I will die here.** He relied upon his defiance to save his life. **And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.** V. 31. **And the king,** assuming the responsibility, **said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and,** after the execution, **bury him, that thou mayest take away the innocent blood which Joab shed, from me and from the house of my father;** for as long as the murderer was unpunished, the blood-guiltiness rested upon the chief magistrate of the land, Num. 35, 30. 31; Deut. 19, 13. V. 32. **And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon the two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner, the son of Ner,** 2 Sam. 3, 27, **captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa,** the son of Jether, 2 Sam. 20, 10, **captain of the host of Judah.** Thus the blood of these men, which had been shed by Joab in deliberate murder, would be avenged. V. 33. **Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab,** to be required at his hand, **and upon the head of his seed forever,** cp. 2 Sam. 3, 28. 29; **but upon David and upon his seed and upon his house, his family in all its descendants, and upon his throne,** upon the royal office hereditary in his family, **shall there be peace forever from the Lord,** salvation and blessing in richest measure. V. 34. **So Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, went up and fell upon him,** in the sanctuary, **and slew him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness,** that of Judah, not far from Bethlehem and Tekoa. V. 35. **And the king put Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada,** who till now had been captain of the king's body-guard, **in his room over the host,** making him commander-in-chief over the army; **and Zadok, the priest, did the king put in the room of Abiathar,** the only high priest in office. No matter if one has, for a long time, walked in the paths of righteousness; if he becomes unfaithful to his Lord, he loses the credit of his former conduct and must suffer the penalty of his transgressions.

The Punishment of Shimei. — V. 36. **And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him,** without specific reference to his crime, of which he was very well aware, **Build thee an house in Jerusalem and dwell there,** for Solomon desired to keep him under surveillance, **and go not forth thence anywhither.** He could move about freely within the city, but was not permitted to leave it. V. 37. **For it shall be that on the day thou goest out and passest over the brook Kidron,** especially with the purpose of returning to his home at Bahurim, **thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die,** he was plainly told that the king could not trust him out of his sight; **thy blood shall be upon thine own head,** he would have no one but himself to blame in case the death-sentence would have to be carried out upon him. V. 38. **And Shimei said unto the king,** in accepting the inevitable and probably counting himself lucky for escaping at all, **The saying is good; as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.** V. 39. **And it came to pass at the end of three years that two of the servants of Shimei,** his slaves, **ran away unto Achish, son of Maachah, king of Gath,** in the Philistine country. **And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.** V. 40. **And Shimei arose,** deliberately ignoring his promise to the king, to whom he should have appealed concerning the return of his slaves, **and saddled his ass, and went to Gath, to Achish, to seek his servants. And Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath,** he was successful in his quest. V. 41. **And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and was come again,** that he had broken his parole. V. 42. **And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the Lord,** taking a solemn oath from him, **and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out and walkest abroad anywhither that thou shalt surely die? And thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good.** V. 43. **Why, then, hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord,** that made in His name, **and the commandment that I have charged**

thee with? He had forfeited his life by breaking his oath. V. 44. **The king said moreover to Shimei,** reminding him of his former wickedness, which he had, to all appearances, not yet laid aside, **Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to,** which his heart knew and continually thought over, **that thou didst to David, my father; therefore the Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head,** he now had to suffer the consequences of his crime; v. 45. **and King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord forever.** The Lord had turned Shimei's curse upon David into a blessing upon his whole house, as the king had prayed, 2 Sam. 16, 12. V. 46. **So the king commanded Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, which went out and fell upon him that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon;** this affair gave him further prestige. Through the proper administration of right and justice the power and prestige of every government is established.

CHAPTER 3.

Solomon's Sacrifice, Prayer, and Wisdom.

Solomon at Gibeon. — V. 1. **And Solomon made affinity,** he entered into a family alliance through marriage, **with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter,** making her his wife chiefly for political reasons, for the two kingdoms were now equally powerful, **and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house,** for he was desirous of erecting his own palace, **and the house of the Lord,** the Temple, **and the wall of Jerusalem round about,** David having fortified only the upper city. V. 2. **Only the people sacrificed in high places,** against the spirit of the Law, Deut. 12, 2—5, **because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord until those days,** and the custom of going to Gibeon, to the Tabernacle, having fallen into disuse since the days of Samuel. V. 3. **And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David, his father,** in all the precepts of the covenant; **only he sacrificed and burned incense in high places,** that having become the custom and now being evidently acceptable to Jehovah. V. 4. **And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there,** in a great inauguration festival; **for that was the great high place,** the most important height in the country and still the official sanctuary. **A thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar,** namely, through the priests. Cp. 2 Chron. 1, 2. V. 5. **In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night,** revealing himself in a vision; **and God said, Ask what I shall give thee,** for the prayer connected with the great sacrifice had pleaded for divine assistance in the work of his government. V. 6. **And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto Thy servant David, my father, great mercy,** he owed everything that he had to the bounty of Jehovah, **according as he walked before Thee in truth and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart with thee; and Thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.** All this came in consequence of the great Messianic promise in which it was included. V. 7. **And now, O Lord, my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king instead of David, my father;** and I am but a little child, he felt that his youth and inexperience were unfitted for the great and arduous tasks laid on him; **I know not how to go out or come in,** how to conduct his entire manner of life as sovereign. V. 8. **And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude,** he felt the responsibility and the obligation of governing the chosen people of Jehovah very keenly. V. 9. **Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart,** one ready to hear and understand every case presented to it properly, **to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge,** by a mere natural ability and shrewdness, **this Thy so great a people?** V. 10. **And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.** V. 11. **And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life,** the boon desired by the majority of men, **neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies,** military glory, all these being blessings which the world craves, **but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment,** to dispense justice in the proper manner, v. 12. **behold, I have done according to thy words,** heard his prayer. **Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart,** both in the possession of great knowledge and in being able to penetrate into difficult cases, **so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee,** equal to him in wisdom. V. 13. **And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor,** military prestige, **so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days,** he would be more renowned than all the sovereigns of his time. V. 14. **And if thou wilt walk in My ways,** this last promise being given with a

condition, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. This last promise was not fulfilled, because Solomon did not keep the condition. V. 15. **And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream,** there could be no question of its being divinely sent. **And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord,** the visible token of God's merciful presence, **and offered up,** by the priests, **burnt offerings, and offered peace-offerings,** to indicate the close fellowship that obtained between him and the covenant God, **and made a feast to all his servants,** a sacrificial meal in connection with the thank-offerings. To those who seek first of all the kingdom of God and His righteousness all other things are added by virtue of His free grace.

Solomon's Wise Decision. — V. 16. **Then came there two women that were harlots unto the king, and stood before him,** seeking a decision in a difficult case. The story is told to show that God had actually endued Solomon with unusual wisdom. V. 17. **And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.** V. 18. **And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered that this woman was delivered also,** the two babies thus being approximately of the same age; **and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house save we two in the house,** no other person to testify on either side. V. 19. **And this woman's child died in the night, because she overlaid it,** unwittingly pressed it to death in her sleep. V. 20. **And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.** The second woman undoubtedly feared that the reproach of having killed her own son would disgrace her. V. 21. **And when I arose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead.** This was at the time of the morning when it was not yet light enough to distinguish clearly. **But when I had considered it in the morning,** in broad daylight, **behold, it was not my son which I did bear.** She was certain of her identification. V. 22. **And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son;** she persisted in claiming the baby as her own. **And this, the accuser, said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king,** quarreling over the possession of the baby. V. 23. **Then said the king,** weighing the facts as presented to him, **The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead, and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.** It seemed to be one woman's unsupported word against another's. V. 24. **And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.** This was done with deliberation, in order to study the effect of every word upon the women. V. 25. **And the king said,** knowing that the real mother would be revealed now, **Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.** V. 26. **Then spake the woman whose the living child was to the king, for her bowels,** her motherly heart, **yearned upon her son,** glowing with a mother's love for her child, **and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it.** She preferred to have the other woman have the child rather than see it be killed. **But the other,** perfectly willing to see the baby put to death, for which she felt no attachment, **said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.** She showed not only an absolute lack of motherly love, but also envy and dislike for her accuser. V. 27. **Then the king answered and said, Give her, the first woman, the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.** Her attitude in preferring to have her rival have the child alive to having it divided proved that she was the mother. V. 28. **And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged,** the decision which he had rendered in this difficult case; **and they feared the king,** they were filled with respect and awe of his wisdom in judging; **for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.** The wisdom of Solomon is but a weak type of the eternal Wisdom, which became man in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily and who judges His people in righteousness.

CHAPTER 4.

Solomon's Officers, Royal Power, and Wisdom.

The Chief Officers. — V. 1. **So King Solomon was king over all Israel,** having come into the full inheritance of his father David. V. 2. **And these were the princes,** the dignitaries, the chief officers and commanders, **which he had: Azariah, the son of Zadok, the priest;** he held the first place among the most trusted counselors of the king; v. 3. **Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes,** the highest civil officers, secretaries of state; **Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, the recorder,** chancellor, 2 Sam. 8, 16; 20, 24. V. 4. **And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the host,** chap. 2, 35; **and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests,** the latter, although deposed, still bearing the title, as in

the New Testament; v. 5. **and Azariah, the son of Nathan, was over the officers,** those whose names are given below; **and Zabud, the son of Nathan, was principal officer and the king's friend,** his confidential adviser, these two being nephews of the king; v. 6. **and Ahishar was over the household,** master of the entire palace, having charge of the entire household; **and Adoniram, the son of Abda, was over the tribute,** overseer of the public works, 2 Sam. 20, 24. V. 7. **And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household,** chiefs or prefects, whose main duty consisted in delivering the allotted food-products from their districts for the maintenance of the king's household; **each man his month in a year made provision.** V. 8. **And these are their names: The son of Hur,** Ben-hur, **in Mount Ephraim;** v. 9. **the son of Dekar,** Ben-dekar, **in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan,** within the teritory of Dan, near the Mediterranean; v. 10. **the son of Hesed,** Ben-hesed, **in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh and all the land of Hepher,** within the territory of Judah; v. 11. **the son of Abinadab,** Ben-abinadab, **in all the region of Dor,** along the coast of the Mediterranean below Carmel, **which had Taphath, the daughter of Solomon, to wife;** v. 12. **Baana, the son of Ahilud,** probably a brother of the chancellor Jehoshaphat; **to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah, beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam,** along the southern border of the Plain of Jezreel, as far east as Jordan; v. 13. **the son of Geber,** in **Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair, the son of Manasseh,** Num. 32, 41, **which are in Gilead,** in the central district east of Jordan; **to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars,** in the northern territory, east of Jordan; v. 14. **Ahinadab, the son of Iddo, had Mahanaim,** an important city on the north side of the Jabbok, within the territory of Gad; v. 15. **Ahimaaz was in Naphtali,** in the north, in the lower ranges of the Lebanon; **he also took Basmath, the daughter of Solomon, to wife;** v. 16. **Baanah, the son of Hushai, was in Asher and in Aloth,** also in the north; v. 17. **Jehoshaphat, the son of Paruah, in Issachar,** practically the entire Plain of Jezreel; v. 18. **Shimei, the son of Elah, in Benjamin,** just north of the territory of Judah; v. 19. **Geber, the son of Uri, was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of Og, king of Bashan,** all the territory east of Jordan which was not in charge of Ben-geber and Ahinadab; **and he was the only officer which was in the land,** in spite of the great extent of the district it had only this one chief officer. The prosperity of the country was in a large measure due to the careful system worked out by Solomon as here outlined. Haphazard and sluggish work does not please the Lord, for He is a God of order.

Solomon's Riches and Power. — V. 20. **Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude,** according to the prophecy of Jehovah, Gen. 22, 17, **eating and drinking and making merry,** happy under the wise and beneficent rule of Solomon. V. 21. **And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river,** the great river Euphrates, **unto the land of the Philistines,** in the southwest, along the Mediterranean, **and unto the border of Egypt,** in the south; **they brought presents,** they were tributary vassals, **and served Solomon all the days of his life.** V. 22. **And Solomon's provision for one day,** the food which he needed for his big royal establishment, **was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,** the total amount of flour having been computed to be 171 bushels, or enough for 28,000 pounds of bread, v. 23. **ten fat oxen,** those especially fattened for the table, **and twenty oxen out of the pastures,** such as were not fattened, **and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks,** gazelles, **and fallow-deer,** antelopes, **and fatted fowl.** This gave a total daily consumption of meat amounting to some 20,000 pounds. V. 24. **For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphsah,** a large and populous town on the west bank of the Euphrates, **even to Azzah,** or Gaza, on the border of the Philistines, in the extreme southwestern section, **over all the kings on this side the river; and he had peace on all sides round about him,** none of the surrounding nations dared to take up arms against him. V. 25. **And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree,** in a state of happy security, **from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon;** his reign completed, also in this respect, the Golden Age of Israel's history. V. 26. **And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots,** four thousand horses for his fourteen hundred chariots, **and twelve thousand horsemen,** his cavalry serving to strengthen his standing army very materially. V. 27. **And those officers,** the twelve enumerated above, **provided victual for King Solomon and for all that came to King Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.** V. 28. **Barley also,** which took the place of oats, **and straw for the horses and dromedaries,** literally, "swift beasts," coursers, probably used for conveying urgent messages, **brought they unto the place where the officers were,** in the various towns where horses were stationed, **every man according**

to his charge. There was universal prosperity and general contentment under the reign of Solomon.

Solomon's Wisdom. — V. 29. **And God,** according to His promise, chap. 3, 12, **gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much and largeness of heart,** sharpness of insight to comprehend conditions and to realize their relationship to others, **even as the sand that is on the seashore,** a description of an innumerable multitude. V. 30. **And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East country,** the Arabians, known for their shrewd judgment of men and circumstances, **and all the wisdom of Egypt,** whose learning at that time was proverbial. V. 31. **For he was wiser than all men,** as God had promised him, chap. 3, 12; **than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman and Chalcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol,** 1 Chron. 2, 6, men celebrated for their knowledge of poetry and music and for their general learning; **and his fame was in all nations round about.** Cp. chap. 10, 1. 23. 24. V. 32. **And he spake three thousand proverbs,** of which the Book of Proverbs offers a selection; **and his songs were a thousand and five,** those which have been preserved being Ps. 72, Ps. 127, and the Song of Solomon. V. 33. **And he spake of trees,** his was not merely a spiritual knowledge, but he also had a remarkable understanding of the kingdom of nature, **from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon,** known for its stately beauty, **even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall,** hardly more than a shrub. **He spake also of beasts,** of the entire animal kingdom, **and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes,** the division of animals into these four classes being then accepted. V. 34. **And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom;** they sent ambassadors to do him homage and to receive more certain information about him. To this day all the wisdom and secret learning of the Orient is connected with Solomon's name. Note: Christ, of whom Solomon is a type, is still greater and more remarkable in every way than this extraordinary king. He is the true King of Peace, and the gifts which He presents to His subjects are spiritual blessings in heavenly places. His is a wisdom from on high, from the bosom of the Father, which will last throughout eternity.

CHAPTER 5.

Preparations for Building the Temple.

Solomon's Message to Hiram. — V. 1. **And Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his servants unto Solomon,** being one of those kings whose ambassadors brought good wishes to the king of Israel and Judah; **for he had heard that they had anointed him in the room of his father; for Hiram was ever a lover of David.** He had reigned even in the time of David, and now that Solomon's accession to the throne was announced, the admirer of the father sent his congratulations to the son. V. 2. **And Solomon,** in continuing the friendly relations which had existed between his father and Hiram, **sent to Hiram,** dispatched an embassy to him, **saying,** v. 3. **Thou knowest how that David, my father, could not build an house unto the name of the Lord, his God, for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them,** his enemies, **under the soles of his feet.** David had entered into negotiations with Hiram to furnish the material for the Temple which he had planned, even before he revealed his intention to the prophet Nathan. When he had finally made known his plans, the Lord had vetoed the proposition, 2 Sam. 7, 5. V. 4. **But now the Lord, my God, hath given me rest on every side,** not a single enemy venturing an attack at that time, **so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent,** such as the rebellions of Absalom and of Sheba at the time of his father. V. 5. **And, behold, I purpose,** he herewith announced his intention, **to build an house unto the name of the Lord, my God, as the Lord spake unto David, my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto My name,** 2 Sam. 7, 13; for in that Messianic promise, according to the nature of prophecy, events near at hand are mingled with those afar off. V. 6. **Now, therefore, command thou that they,** Hiram's servants, **hew me cedar-trees out of Lebanon,** for the finest specimens of this tree grew on the northwestern slopes of the Lebanon, in the territory of Phenicia; **and my servants shall be with thy servants; and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint,** they would surely be able to come to some agreement; **for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.** The men of Sidon had a reputation as builders, for they were continually engaged in ship-building, and constant practise gave them the skill which they needed for their work. It seems that Hiram belonged to those heathen who, at that time, knew the true God and believed in Him, as his answer indicates. V. 7. **And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon,** as transmitted to him by the members of the embassy, **that he rejoiced greatly and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto**

David a wise son over this great people. Good, wise rulers are a gift of God and should be acknowledged as such. V. 8. **And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying,** in a letter, 2 Chron. 2, 11, **I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for; and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar and concerning timber of fir,** acting in everything according to Solomon's good pleasure. V. 9. **My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea,** by floating the logs down on the streams; **and I will convey them by sea in floats,** that is, rafts, **unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them; and thou shalt,** in return, in payment, **accomplish my desire in giving food for my household.** V. 10. **So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-trees and fir-trees,** cypress-trees whose wood is practically imperishable and not readily attacked by worms, **according to all his desire,** as many as he asked for. It is an evidence of the grace and mercy of God that He, at all times, has had His chosen people among the heathen also. This was prophetical of the New Testament period, when the kingdom of Messiah has been extended to include the fulness of the Gentiles.

Arrangements concerning Material. — V. 11. **And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat,** about 260,000 bushels, **for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil,** a little more than 1,600 gallons, this oil being obtained, not by pressing out the fruit, but by bruising the berries and then permitting the juice to run out freely. **Thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year,** that was the price agreed upon by them. V. 12. **And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as He promised him,** not only in concluding this contract in a satisfactory manner, but also in making wise and good provisions for every part of the immense undertaking. **And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together,** this alliance being to the advantage of the work undertaken by Solomon. V. 13. **And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel,** he drafted a number of Israelites, members of the nation, for this work; **and the levy was thirty thousand men.** V. 14. **And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses; a month they were in Lebanon,** engaged in felling and transporting cedar- and cypress-trees, **and two months at home,** attending to the cultivation of their land; **and Adoniram,** the superintendent of public works, **was over the levy.** V. 15. **And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains,** men engaged in stone-cutting, these 150,000 servants being members of the Canaanitish, conquered races, v. 16. **beside the chief of Solomon's officers,** the foremen placed over the workmen, **which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.** In the total number of overseers 250 were Israelites, and 300 were foreigners, 2 Chron. 8, 10. V. 17. **And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones,** immense, splendid stones, without a single flaw, **to lay the foundation of the house,** these being carefully shaped after being hewn out of the quarry. V. 18. **And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers,** the Giblites, the inhabitants of a Phenician town in the foothills of the Lebanon. **So they prepared timber and stones to build the house,** every piece receiving the proper treatment with reference to its place in the great building which was to be erected. The Church of Jesus Christ, the great Temple not made by hands, is an eternal house and kingdom. And all servants of Christ, all believers, have been called to assist in building this Temple, in extending the Church of God throughout all the world.

CHAPTER 6.

The Building of the Temple.

The Building Itself. — V. 1. **And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt,** this exact chronological statement serving as a guide and norm for the solution of all problems concerned with the fixing of time in that period of Israel's history, **in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif,** corresponding roughly to our May, **which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord,** evidently on the very day of the new moon. V. 2. **And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof,** of the main building, of the Sanctuary proper, **was threescore cubits,** inside measure, the cubit used in this case being either eighteen or twenty-one inches in length, **and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.** V. 3. **And the porch,** a sort of entrance-hall, **before the Temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof,** it was as long as the Sanctuary was wide, **according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof,** its depth, **before the house.** V. 4. **And for the**

house he made windows of narrow lights, set apparently near the ceiling, with a wide opening on the inside, but gradually becoming narrower toward the outside, and covered with heavy screens, or grilles. V. 5. **And against the wall of the house,** leaning against the Sanctuary, as it were, **he built chambers round about,** wings flanking the main building, **both of the temple,** the Holy Place, **and of the oracle,** the Most Holy Place; **and he made chambers round about,** ribs, or joints, which divided the wings into distinct compartments. V. 6. **The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle,** the second story, **was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad; for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about,** literally, "he provided lessening to the house round about outside," that is, the wall was recessed or made thinner for each succeeding story of the outer structure, **that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house,** for the fine, costly stones of the Temple proper were to remain whole and uninjured, that no holes should be cut into them for the purpose of inserting the ends of the ceiling-beams. V. 7. **And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither,** hewn and prepared according to careful measurements at the quarries, **so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.** V. 8. **The door for the middle chamber,** the side-structure, or wings, **was in the right side of the house,** on the south side; **and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber,** inside the side-structure, **and out of the middle into the third.** V. 9. **So he built the house and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.** This was the roof-construction, a flat roof, whose cedar-beams were covered with cedar-boards, as the roof proper. V. 10. **And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high,** for each story; **and they rested on the house with timber of cedar,** whose ends, resting upon the top of the walls of the Temple, served to unite the side-structure with the main building. V. 11. **And the word of the Lord came to Solomon,** probably through one of the prophets, **saying,** v. 12. **Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in My statutes, and execute My judgments, and keep all My commandments to walk in them, then will I perform My word with thee which I spake unto David, thy father,** that contained in the wonderful Messianic promise, 2 Sam. 7, 13; v. 13. **and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel.** The eternal confirmation and establishment of the throne of David included the living of Jehovah among His people, presupposed this, in fact. "Such a promise necessarily encouraged and strengthened Solomon in his great and difficult undertaking, as it reminded and urged him to the performance of his sacred obligations." (Lange.) V. 14. **So Solomon built the house and finished it,** under the inspiration of this promise. The Temple of Solomon is a type of the great Temple of the New Testament, the Christian Church. There Jehovah lives in the midst of His people, through His Word and Spirit. But only those who truly believe and live a life of faith are citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

The Ornamentation of the Temple. — V. 15. **And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar,** veneering the stone walls with this fine lumber, **both the floor of the house and the walls of the ceiling,** literally, "from the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling"; **and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir,** with cypress-flooring. V. 16. **And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house,** the rear or western end of the entire Sanctuary, **both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar,** from the floor to the beams of the ceiling; **he even built them, this space, for it within, even for the oracle, even for the Most Holy Place,** which was thus separated from the Holy Place by a partition of cedar-wood. V. 17. **And the house,** that is, the temple before it, the Holy Place, **was forty cubits long.** V. 18. **And the cedar of the house within,** in the walls and ceilings, **was carved with knops and open flowers,** raised work in flowers and festooning; **all was cedar; there was no stone seen.** V. 19. **And the oracle,** the Most Holy Place, **he prepared in the house within to set there the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.** V. 20. **And the oracle,** this room, **in the forepart, was twenty cubits in length and twenty cubits in breadth and twenty cubits in the height thereof,** a perfect cubical space, which may have had an unused attic room, if the Sanctuary was thirty cubits high over its entire length; **and he overlaid it with pure gold,** in the form of thin sheets; **and so covered the altar, which was of cedar,** this being the altar of incense, which stood against the immediate wall of the Most Holy Place and was almost considered a part of its equipment, Ex. 30, 6; 40, 5. 26. V. 21. **So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold; and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle,** these chains evidently being fastened to the east wall of the Most Holy Place and serving to hold the bolts of the doors in place; **and he overlaid it with gold.** V. 22. **And the whole house,** both rooms of the Sanctuary, **he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house; also the whole altar**

that was by the oracle, the altar of incense, he overlaid with gold. V. 23. And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive-tree, of the wood of wild olive-trees, very strong and durable, each ten cubits high, apparently figures resembling human beings, at least in some respect, 2 Chron. 3, 13. V. 24. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, as it was stretched out, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub; from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. V. 25. And the other cherub was ten cubits; both the cherubim were of one measure and one size. V. 26. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. V. 27. And he set the cherubim within the inner house, in the Most Holy Place; and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubim, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings, as they faced toward the east, touched one another in the midst of the house. V. 28. And he overlaid the cherubim with gold. V. 29. And he carved all the walls of the house, the edges being raised and the figures sunken, round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers, buds or flower-work, probably in the nature of festoons, within and without, on both sides of the partition. V. 30. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. V. 31. And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive-tree; the lintel and side-posts were a fifth part of the wall, that is, the entrance was four cubits broad. V. 32. The two doors, the leaves of the double door, also were of olive-tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers, as in the walls, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubim and upon the palm-trees, the thin plates of gold making the entire figures appear as if made of chased gold. V. 33. So also made he for the door of the Temple, for the entrance to the Holy Place, posts of olive-tree, a fourth part of the wall, the width of this entrance thus being five cubits. V. 34. And the two doors were of fir-tree, of cypress-wood; the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding, so that only a part of the opening might be in use. V. 35. And he carved thereon cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers, and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work, carefully fitted over the carving according to the rules of the craft. V. 36. And he built the inner court, that reserved for the priests, with three rows of hewed stone and a row of cedar-beams, the wall of stones being topped off by the coping of cedar-wood. V. 37. In the fourth year, namely, of Solomon's reign, was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif, v. 38. and in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof and according to all the fashion of it, as it had been planned. So was he seven years in building it, the exact time being seven years and six months. The Temple of God, the Christian Church, of which Solomon's Temple was a type, is an eternal kingdom, with a divine glory, the glory and majesty of Jehovah's mercy. It is a paradise on earth, a place of peace and bliss without end.

CHAPTER 7.

Further Account of Solomon's Building Operations.

Solomon's Palace. — V. 1. But Solomon was building his own house, the complex of buildings which was his palace, thirteen years, and he finished all his house. V. 2. He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon, the first of the buildings composing his palace (the length thereof was an hundred cubits and the breadth thereof fifty cubits and the height thereof thirty cubits) upon four rows of cedar-pillars, with cedar-beams upon the pillars. These pillars in their four rows stood along the surrounding wall, thus forming a peristyle enclosing a courtyard. V. 3. And it was covered, it had a ceiling or roof, with cedar above upon the beams, the large joists, that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row. So the forty-five rooms arose in three stories of fifteen rooms each. V. 4. And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks, literally, "And layers of joists there were three rows, and prospect over against prospect three times," that is, the window-openings in the three stories on the inside offered a view of the corresponding section across the court, the effect probably being that of galleries surrounding the court. V. 5. And all the doors and posts were square, the door- and window-openings with their lintels and sills, with the windows; and light was against light in three ranks, the openings being arranged so as to have both sides of the palace correspond exactly. V. 6. And he made a porch of pillars, a special portico or colonnade; the length thereof was fifty cubits and the breadth thereof thirty cubits; and the porch was before them, for the colonnade

before the House of Lebanon led to the Porch of Judgment; **and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them,** this being the entrance space to the colonnade. This entire building, therefore, seems to have been an open hall, with special porches at either end. V. 7. **Then he made a porch for the throne,** apparently at the end of the great colonnade, **where he might judge, even the Porch of Judgment,** for it served both purposes; **and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other;** three sides of this porch receiving walls of cedar from the floor to the roof-beams, it was a porch enclosed on three sides, and its floor, as well as that of the great colonnade, was covered with cedar-wood. V. 8. **And his house where he dwelt,** the fourth building of the palace complex, **had another court within the porch,** the royal residence was behind the throne-room and the Hall of Judgment, **which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter,** a special residence for the queen, **whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch.** So the complex of buildings which formed the king's palace was probably arranged as follows: The great House of Lebanon, the armory of the king, with its peristyle and court toward the rear; beyond that the great colonnade, with its entrance porch, leading to the throne-room and Judgment Hall beyond; a special court with the dwelling of the king and that of the queen, together with such further buildings as were needed for the royal household. V. 9. **All these were of costly stones,** perfect building-stones, without a flaw, **according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping,** to the corner-stones on which the beams of the roof rested, **and so on the outside toward the great court,** which surrounded the entire complex of palace buildings. V. 10. **And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.** V. 11. **And above,** where the wall was visible, **were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.** V. 12. **And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones and a row of cedar-beams, both for the inner court of the house of the Lord and for the porch of the house.** So the enclosure of the great court of the royal palace was a copy of the enclosure surrounding the priests' court in the Temple. Thus Solomon ruled and lived in the midst of his people, near the Temple of Jehovah, even as the greater Son of David, Jesus Christ, lives and reigns in His eternal kingdom.

The Metal Appointment of the Temple.— V. 13. **And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre,** a namesake of the Phenician king. V. 14. **He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali,** by birth a member of the tribe of Dan, she had first married into the tribe of Naphtali, **and his father was a man of Tyre,** a native of that city, **a worker in brass,** a very ancient craft; **and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and cunning to work all works in brass,** in the various alloys of copper. **And he,** at the instigation of the Phenician king, **came to King Solomon, and wrought all his work,** all the metal work needed for the Temple. V. 15. **For he cast two pillars of brass,** hollow tubes, **of eighteen cubits high apiece,** the shaft of the pillars being that high; **and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about,** that represented their circumference. V. 16. **And he made two chapiters,** or capitals, **of molten brass to set upon the tops of the pillars; the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was five cubits,** v. 17. **and nets of checker-work,** ornaments of woven work, **and wreaths of chain-work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapiter and seven for the other chapiter,** these ornaments having the form of chains or festoons at the base of the capital. V. 18. **And he made the pillars and two rows round about upon the one network to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates,** the one row of molten pomegranates being above the network, the other below; **and so he did for the other chapiter.** V. 19. **And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch,** they had the form of a full-blown lily-cup, **four cubits.** V. 20. **And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against, just next to, the belly which was by the net-work,** where the casting showed an arching or swelling, probably at the place where the calyx of the flower was to be indicated; **and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapiter,** set toward the four quarters of heaven. V. 21. **And he set up the pillars in the porch of the Temple,** serving as a portal to the Sanctuary; **and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin** ("He has established"), to indicate that this was now the central Sanctuary of the Lord; **and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz** ("In it is strength"), to indicate that the might of Jehovah was now in this Temple. V. 22. **And upon the top of the pillars,** which are characteristic of Phenician architecture, **was lily work; so was the work of the pillars finished.** V. 23. **And he made a molten sea,** a large vessel for holding water, taking the place of a tank, **ten cubits from the one brim to the other,** that was the diameter, in the approximate number of cubits; **it was round,** circular, all

about, and his height was five cubits; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about, the mathematical proportion being only roughly indicated. V. 24. And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, small ornaments in the shape of flower-buds, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about; the knops were cast in two rows when it was cast. V. 25. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east. And the sea was set above upon them, they themselves being set upon some sort of platform, and all their hinder parts were inward. V. 26. And it was an handbreadth thick, that was the thickness of the casting, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies, like a full-blown lily; it contained two thousand baths (almost 9,500 gallons, according to lowest estimate). V. 27. And he made ten bases of brass, to hold the basins with water for the washing of the sacrificial meat; four cubits was the length of one base and four cubits the breadth thereof and three cubits the height of it. V. 28. And the work of the bases was on this manner, the workmanship connected with their being cast: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges, panels enclosed by ornamental moldings; v. 29. and on the borders that were between the ledges, on the walls or panels of the bases, were lions, oxen, and cherubim; and upon the ledges there was a base above, a sort of groove for the basin which was placed upon the base; and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work, figures in the form of suspended wreaths. V. 30. And every base had four brazen wheels and plates of brass, axles of that material; and the four corners thereof had undersetters, literally, "shoulder-pieces," parts which projected over and covered the wheels; under the laver were undersetters molten, at the side of every addition, literally, "each next to a wreath," one of those suspended beneath the panels. V. 31. And the mouth of it within the chapiter and above was a cubit, this was the opening in the base, one cubic from the lower edge; but the mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, corresponding to the general appearance of the entire lavers, a cubit and an half, evidently in diameter; and also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round, that is, the spaces round about the opening at the top of the base, which served to hold the basin, were filled with small panels, like those on the sides of the bases. V. 32. And under the borders, beneath the side-panels, were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base, the wheels were held firmly on their axles by special contrivances; and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit, this bringing the height of the base to about one and three-fourths cubit. V. 33. And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot-wheel, possessing all the parts of an ordinary wheel; their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes were all molten. V. 34. And there were four undersetters, those peculiar shoulder-pieces, to the four corners of one base; and the undersetters were of the very base itself, an integral part of the casting. V. 35. And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high, for the base arose in a gentle rounding above its paneled portion; and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same, namely, as those of the foot. V. 36. For on the plates of the ledges thereof and on the borders thereof he graved cherubim, lions, and palm-trees, according to the proportion of every one, the empty space at his disposal, and additions round about, work of wreaths. V. 37. After this manner he made the ten bases; all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size. They were movable bases for the ten lavers, whose ledges acted as ribs, giving strength to the structure, while the panels between the ledges or moldings were filled with decorative work. V. 38. Then made he ten lavers of brass, used as containers of water for ceremonial washings; one laver contained forty baths, upward of two hundred gallons; and every laver was four cubits, either in diameter or in circumference; and upon every one of the ten bases one laver. V. 39. And he put five bases on the right, or south, side of the house and five on the left side of the house; and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, over against the south. So the lavers were placed on either side of the Sanctuary, while the molten sea was situated southeast of the Sanctuary and southwest of the altar of burnt offering. V. 40. And Hiram made the lavers and the shovels, for removing the ashes, and the basins, for catching the blood of the sacrificial animals. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord: v. 41. the two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars, the lily-shaped capitals; and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; v. 42. and four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pil-

lars, as described in vv. 15—22; v. 43. and the ten bases and ten lavers on the bases; v. 44. and one sea and twelve oxen under the sea; v. 45. and the pots and the shovels and the basins; and all these vessels which Hiram made to King Solomon for the house of the Lord were of bright brass, polished after the casting, until it shone like gold. V. 46. In the Plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground, in molds of potters' earth, between Succoth and Zarthan, the foundry being on the west side of Jordan, where the soil is peculiarly adapted for that purpose. V. 47. And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many, the quantity of brass being so very great, 1 Chron. 18, 8; neither was the weight of the brass found out, nobody took the trouble to determine it. V. 48. And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord, those used in the Sanctuary: the altar of gold, that of incense, Ex. 37, 25, and the table of gold, whereupon the showbread was, Ex. 25, 30, v. 49, and the candlesticks of pure gold, in place of the single one of the Tabernacle, five on the right side and five on the left, before the oracle, in the Holy Place, with the flowers and the lamps, on the candlesticks, and the tongs of gold, the snuffers, v. 50. and the bowls, Ex. 12, 22, and the snuffers, the knives or shears for cleaning the wicks of the lamps, and the basins, and the spoons, vessels for incense, and the censers, Ex. 25, 38, of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the Most Holy Place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the Temple. V. 51. So was ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David, his father, had dedicated; even the silver and the gold and the vessels did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord. David had taken large quantities of metal, brass, silver, and gold, from the nations which he had conquered. So great was the supply that it was not exhausted by the heavy demand made upon the stores at the building of the Temple and the making of the various appointments for the services. Willingness in sacrificing for the work of the Lord, also in building and equipping places of worship, is altogether pleasing to the Lord if it flows from a heart filled with true love toward Him.

CHAPTER 8.

The Dedication of the Temple.

The Ceremony of Dedication. — V. 1. Then Solomon, the Temple being completed in all its parts, assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, the princes of the father-houses, all these being representatives of the entire congregation, unto King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion, the summit of Moriah being higher than Mount Zion. V. 2. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, also known as Tishri, which is the seventh month. The festival here referred to is the Feast of Tabernacles, which seems at that time to have been better observed than the other two great festivals, and it was very appropriate that Solomon chose just this season of the year. V. 3. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark, the bearing of which was their special work, Num. 4, 15. V. 4. And they brought up the ark of the Lord and the Tabernacle of the Congregation, the tent which seems finally to have been located on a hill near Gibeon, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up, the latter carrying the coverings of the Tabernacle, Num. 3, 31; 4, 5 ff. V. 5. And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him were with him before the ark, in a procession which went ahead of the priests, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told or numbered for multitude, nobody thought it worth while to count the great number of sacrifices, for there was no regard to expense. V. 6. And the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the Most Holy Place, even under the wings of the cherubim, evidently setting the ark so as to have it stand with its length north and south. V. 7. For the cherubim, chap. 6, 27, spread forth their two wings, those which touched in the middle of the room, over the place of the ark, and the cherubim, bending forward as did those on the cover of the ark, covered the ark and the staves thereof above. V. 8. And they drew out the staves, that is, the staves were very long on account of the great weight of the ark and on account of the fact that the bearers were not allowed to touch the sacred vessel, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the Holy Place before the oracle, that is, if any one approached very near to the Most Holy Place; and they were not seen without; and there they are unto this day, this account having been written before the destruction of Jerusalem. V. 9. There was nothing in the ark save

the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. It seems, then, that "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded," Heb. 9, 4, had been removed from the ark or were again deposited later. V. 10. **And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, that the cloud,** the visible token of the presence of Jehovah in the fulness of His majesty, as in the wilderness, **filled the house of the Lord,** v. 11. **so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.** Cp. Ex. 40, 34. 35. The entire Sanctuary was filled with this gracious manifestation, making it impossible for the priests, for the time being, to perform their work. The Church of the New Testament is assured of the continual merciful presence of Jehovah, until at last we shall progress from believing to seeing.

Solomon's Address. — V. 12. **Then spake Solomon,** evidently from the platform which he had prepared in the midst of the court, 2 Chron. 6, 13, **The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness,** Ex. 19, 9; Lev. 16, 2. The cloud which he beheld was to Solomon a sign that Jehovah had come down to dwell in the Temple. V. 13. **I have surely built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in forever,** a firmly established Sanctuary. He had in mind the merciful relation of Jehovah to the true Israel as it would continue, according to the Messianic promises, throughout eternity. V. 14. **And the king,** who had uttered this exclamation with face turned toward the Sanctuary, **turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel; (and all the congregation of Israel stood,** out in the great court toward the east;) v. 15. **and he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with His mouth unto David, my father, and hath with His hand fulfilled it, saying,** cp. 2 Sam. 7, 5—13, v. 16. **Since the day that I brought forth My people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house that My name might be therein,** He had ordered only the Tabernacle to be built for His worship; **but I chose David to be over My people Israel,** under whom Israel entered into the full and quiet possession of the Promised Land. V. 17. **And it was in the heart of David, my father, to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel,** 2 Sam. 7, 2. V. 18. **And the Lord said unto David, my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto My name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.** V. 19. **Nevertheless, thou shalt not build the house, but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto My name.** Cp. 2 Sam. 7, 4—16; 1 Chron. 22, 6—11; 28, 2—7. V. 20. **And the Lord hath performed His word that He spake, and I am risen up in the room of David, my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.** This explanation was given in such detail in order that the people might understand the situation exactly and appreciate the goodness and mercy of Jehovah. V. 21. **And I have set there a place for the ark wherein is the covenant of the Lord,** for the Ten Commandments on the two tables of stone represented the core, or nucleus, of the entire covenant between Jehovah and Israel, **which He made with our fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.** "It is worthy of notice that at the beginning and the conclusion of the address the building of the Temple is placed in relation to the deliverance from Egypt." (Lange.)

Solomon's Invocation. — V. 22. **And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord,** the great altar of burnt offering in the Court of the Priests, **in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,** in a gesture of the most eager supplication; v. 23. **and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee, in heaven above or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart;** all the so-called gods of the heathen could simply not stand the comparison, they could not come into consideration; v. 24. **who hast kept with Thy servant David, my father, that Thou promisedst him; Thou spakest also with Thy mouth and hast fulfilled it with Thine hand, as it is this day,** visible before the eyes of all men. V. 25. **Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with Thy servant David, my father,** also in the future, **that Thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in My sight to sit on the throne of Israel, so that,** this expressing the condition of Jehovah for the fulfilment of His promise, **thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as thou hast walked before Me.** In that event the family of David would be assured a continual rule over the kingdom of Israel. V. 26. **And now, O God of Israel, let Thy word, I pray Thee, be verified which Thou spakest unto Thy servant David, my father.** It is an urgent petition as the careful repetition shows. V. 27. **But will God indeed dwell on the earth?** making even such a splendid palace as the Temple His habitation among men. **Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens,** all the space which the imagination of man can reach, **cannot contain Thee,** even their all-embracing extent was insufficient for the infinite God; **how much less this house that**

I have builded! Though Jehovah could not be confined to this one house, yet He was appealed to to reveal His merciful presence, especially in hearing the prayers of His children there. V. 28. **Yet have Thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord, my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which Thy servant prayeth before Thee to-day,** v. 29. **that Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which Thou hast said, My name shall be there,** Deut. 12, 11; **that Thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which Thy servant shall make toward this place,** He should be alert to hear and to fulfil the prayers of those who would call on Him in this Temple. V. 30. **And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel when they shall pray toward this place; and hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling-place,** as the prayers rise to the Throne of Grace; **and when Thou hearest, forgive,** for forgiveness of sins is not only the greatest blessing which man may have here below, but man can hope for the acceptance of his prayer only when his sins are forgiven, since every answer to prayer rests on the sin-pardoning grace of God. V. 31. **If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before Thine altar in this house,** the place of divine witness and presence, v. 32. **then hear Thou in heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head,** punishing him for his false oath, **and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.** The name of Jehovah, to whom this Temple was dedicated, was by all means to be kept holy. V. 33. **When Thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy because they have sinned against Thee,** Lev. 26, 17; Deut. 28, 25, **and shall turn again to Thee, and confess Thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto Thee in this house,** seeking the face of the Lord in true repentance, v. 34. **then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which Thou gavest unto their fathers,** taking away their captivity for the sake of His mercy. V. 35. **When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against Thee,** Lev. 26, 19; Deut. 11, 17; 28, 23; **if they pray toward this place, and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou afflictest them,** for drought, especially in Palestine, was rightly considered a sign of curse and punishment, v. 36. **then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy servants and of Thy people Israel, that Thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon Thy land which Thou hast given to Thy people for an inheritance.** Because God teaches, educates, His people, tries to bring them back to the right way by means of punishments, therefore He is asked to forgive if His people acknowledge the punishment and plead for forgiveness. V. 37. **If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar,** Lev. 26, 19—26; Deut. 28, 22. 23; **if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities,** in all their gates, throughout their land; **whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;** v. 38. **what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man or by all Thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart,** if they acknowledge the punishment as a chastisement of God directed at their heart, **and spread forth his hands toward this house,** v. 39. **then hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest; (for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)** v. 40. **that they may fear Thee all the days that they live in the land which Thou gavest unto our fathers.** God, who knows the heart of every man, can treat each individual case as its merits demand. V. 41. **Moreover, concerning a stranger, that is not of Thy people Israel,** not a member of the chosen nation by birth, **but cometh out of a far country for Thy name's sake,** as a proselyte of the gate, if not of righteousness; v. 42. **(for they shall hear of Thy great name and of Thy strong hand and of Thy stretched-out arm,** even as the surrounding nations had heard of it at the time of the wilderness journey;) **when he shall come and pray toward this house,** v. 43. **hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for, that all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel,** convinced of the supremacy of His divine power by the fulfilment of their prayer; **and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by Thy name,** that His almighty power was manifested in the midst of Israel. V. 44. **If Thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever Thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which Thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for Thy name,** the outward turning of the face and body being a sign of the inward turning of the heart, v. 45. **then hear Thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause,** causing right and justice to take their course upon them. V. 46. **If they sin against Thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,** a truth which is properly emphasized at all times,)

and Thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near, deportations of this kind being the custom in Oriental lands at that time; v. 47. **yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, return to sense and reason, and repent, and make supplication unto Thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness,** such a free and unequivocal confession being required in case of real sorrow over sins, v. 48. **and so return unto Thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto Thee toward their land which Thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for Thy name:** v. 49. **then hear Thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven, Thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause,** uphold their right, v. 50. **and forgive Thy people that have sinned against Thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against Thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them;** v. 51. **for they be Thy people and Thine inheritance,** Deut. 9, 29, **which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron,** Deut. 4, 20; v. 52. **that Thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of Thy servant and unto the supplication of Thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto Thee.** V. 53. **For Thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth,** chose them out of all nations, **to be Thine inheritance, as Thou spakest by the hand of Moses, Thy servant, when Thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.** Thus Solomon, in seven petitions of his dedication prayer, had brought before the Lord the principal needs of his people, as they would find expression in prayer. Note: Christians call upon the Lord in the name of Jesus Christ, asking forgiveness and help for the sake of His redemption, being sure that He will in no wise cast them out.

The Feast of Dedication. — V. 54. **And it was so that, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.** V. 55. **And he stood,** facing the people once more, **and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,** v. 56. **Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto His people Israel,** all the uncertainty of the last centuries now being exchanged for the certainty of a definite capital and of an established Sanctuary, **according to all that He promised; there hath not failed one word of all His good promise which He promised by the hand of Moses, His servant.** Cp. Deut. 12, 10; Josh. 21, 45; 23, 14. V. 57. **The Lord, our God, be with us as He was with our fathers,** for with His gracious presence in their midst, they were sure of continued blessings. **Let Him not leave us nor forsake us,** rather granting help against their enemies always, v. 58. **that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments which He commanded our fathers,** all His instructions to His people, in whatever form they may have come to them; v. 59. **and let these my words wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord be nigh unto the Lord, our God, day and night, that He maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require,** as the needs of every new day require it; v. 60. **that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.** V. 61. **Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord, our God,** being dedicated to Him in undivided allegiance, **to walk in His statutes, and to keep His commandments, as at this day.** A real prayer, made in the fervor of a heart trusting in the mercy of Jehovah for Christ's sake, is always acceptable in His sight. V. 62. **And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord,** in a grand and impressive service of worship. V. 63. **And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings,** to emphasize the soundness of the covenant relationship and to have the people partake of a great sacrificial feast **which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep,** a number of sacrificial animals which could easily be handled by the housefathers present, who undoubtedly made use of their priestly prerogatives at that time in assisting the priests by slaughtering animals. **So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord.** V. 64. **The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord,** consecrating it as a place where sacrifices might be offered on temporary altars; **for there he offered burnt offerings and meat-offerings and the fat of the peace-offerings,** of which only the fat was burned, the rest being used for food, **because the brazen altar that was before the Lord was too little to receive the burnt offerings and meat-offerings and the fat of the peace-offerings.** V. 65. **And at that time Solomon held a feast,** the Feast of Tabernacles, in connection with the dedication of the Temple, **and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of**

Hamath, in the extreme north, on the Orontes, **unto the river of Egypt**, in the extreme southwest, **before the Lord, our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days**, doubling the usual number, seven days being devoted to the dedication festival and seven days to the Feast of Tabernacles. V. 66. **On the eighth day**, namely, of the Feast of Tabernacles, **he sent the people away. And they blessed the king**, wishing him the fulness of good fortune, **and went unto their tents**, returned to their homes, **joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David, His servant, and for Israel, His people.** He who has sincerely given thanks to the Lord for all His kindness and mercy may return to his work in cheerfulness and peace.

CHAPTER 9.

God's Blessings upon Solomon.

The Lord's Answer to Solomon's Prayer. V. 1. **And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord**, which occupied seven years, **and the king's house**, his own palace, which occupied thirteen years, **and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do**, such public works as he undertook in various parts of his dominions, v. 2. **that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared unto him at Gibeon**, chap. 3, 5. V. 3. **And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before Me**, at the dedication of the Temple. **I have hallowed this house which Thou hast built to put My name there forever**; by filling the Temple with the cloud of His gracious presence He assured Solomon and all Israel of His merciful assistance; **and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually**, His eyes, to watch over His chosen people, also against their enemies, and His heart in sincere love and solicitude for their welfare. V. 4. **And if thou wilt walk before Me as David, thy father, walked**, in his entire conduct, **in integrity of heart**, in true piety, **and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep My statutes and My judgments**, both the precepts concerning Israel alone and those pertaining to mankind in general, v. 5. **then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever, as I promised to David, thy father**, 2 Sam. 7, 12, **saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.** V. 6. **But if ye shall at all turn from following Me, ye or your children**, for this matter concerned not only the reigning family, but the entire nation, **and will not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them**, v. 7. **then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them**, eradicate, utterly destroy them; **and this house, which I have hallowed for My name, will I cast out of My sight**, reject it as a sanctuary of Jehovah; **and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people**; v. 8. **and at this house, which is high**, a very conspicuous object to all passers-by, **every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss**, in mockery and derision; **and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land and to this house?** V. 9. **And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord, their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshiped them, and served them; therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.** The threat is identical with that of Deut. 28, 37. 45. 63; chap. 29, 23—26. Cp. Lev. 26, 14; Josh. 23, 16. Even the believers, who serve the Lord with gladness, are in need of continual admonition to remain in faith and in obedience, lest they be tempted to unfaithfulness and fall.

Solomon's Resources and Power. — V. 10. **And it came to pass at the end of twenty years**, when Solomon's chief building operations had been brought to an end, **when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house**, v. 11. **(now Hiram, the king of Tyre, had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees and fir-trees, cypress-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee**, in the northern part, in the mountain country of Naphtali. V. 12. **And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him**, to make a tour of inspection; **and they pleased him not**, they were not located in a prosperous part of the country. V. 13. **And he said**, in a tone of contempt, **What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the Land of Cabul** (closed, without an outlet) **unto this day.** So the district was later spoken of by people acquainted with the transaction. Hiram restored the cities to Solomon, 2 Chron. 8, 2, who thereupon satisfied him in some other way, for their friendly relations were not disturbed. V. 14. **And Hiram sent to the king six score talents of gold**, almost two and one half million dollars, evidently a loan to enable Solomon to complete his projected buildings and improvements. V. 15. **And this is the reason of the levy**, literally, "as to the

matter of the enforced labor," **which King Solomon raised: for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo,** the fortifications, the citadel of the capital, **and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer,** three cities which strategic reasons caused Solomon to fortify strongly. V. 16. **For Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burned it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.** This fortified city now served to safeguard the southwestern boundary of the kingdom. V. 17. **And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon, the nether,** toward the Philistine country, v. 18. **and Baalath,** also in the neighborhood of the Philistine country, **and Tadmor in the wilderness,** the ancient Palmyra, on an oasis between Damascus and the Euphrates, **in the land,** v. 19. **and all the cities of store that Solomon had,** where he had large deposits of food and war-materials, **and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen,** the cavalry of his standing army, **and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem,** all the public improvements, **and in Lebanon and in all the land of his dominion.** V. 20. **And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites,** the heathen nations which had formerly occupied Palestine, **which were not of the children of Israel,** v. 21. **their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy,** Josh. 15, 63; 17, 12, **upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day,** pressing them into service for the menial labor connected with his projects. V. 22. **But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen, but they were men-of-war,** officials of the war department, **and his servants,** heads of the civil bureaus, **and his princes,** chief officers **of the army, and his captains,** royal adjutants, **and rulers of his chariots and his horsemen,** commanders of this department of the king's army. V. 23. **These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work,** superintending the erection of the public buildings and improvements. V. 24. **But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David,** where she had resided until the completion of the new palace, **unto her house which Solomon had built for her; then did he build Millo,** the citadel intended to protect the upper city. V. 25. **And three times in a year,** apparently on the three chief festivals, Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, **did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord; and he burned incense upon the altar that was before the Lord,** presenting his meat-offering three times a year, through the priests, as well as his burnt and peace-offering. **So he finished the house,** it became all that it was designed for and intended to be, a house where men could communicate with Jehovah and enter into fellowship with Him. V. 26. **And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea,** on the Elanitic Gulf, **in the land of Edom.** V. 27. **And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea,** trained seamen, **with the servants of Solomon.** V. 28. **And they came to Ophir,** the location of which is not definitely decided, though some facts speak for Eastern Africa, **and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents,** somewhat more than eight million dollars, **and brought it to King Solomon.** In this way Solomon took care of the welfare and security of his people. His kingdom is a type of the eternal kingdom of Christ with its spiritual and heavenly blessings.

CHAPTER 10.

Visit of the Queen of Sheba.

The Queen of Sheba at Solomon's Court. V. 1. **And when the queen of Sheba,** a country in Arabia Felix, on the Red Sea, **heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord,** because the Lord was glorified in him, **she came to prove him with hard questions,** to test his reputed wisdom with difficult problems. V. 2. **And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train,** with a very numerous retinue in men, **with camels that bare spices,** the most costly products of her country, **and very much gold and precious stones. And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart,** all the difficult problems and all the enigmatical questions which she had collected and devised. V. 3. **And Solomon told her all her questions,** he was able to answer, and give the solution of, all the enigmas propounded by her; **there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not,** he understood all her allusions and explained all her proverbial sayings V. 4. **And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom,** having gotten the proof she was looking for at first hand, **and the house that he had built,** v. 5. **and the meat,** the food, **of his table, and the sitting of his servants,** the civil officers who sat at the royal table, **and the attendance of his ministers,** that of the servants, es-

pecially at table, which included the service of the cup-bearers, and their apparel, the splendid liveries which they wore in the king's service, and his cup-bearers, the entire equipment or arrangement connected with the serving of wines, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, the magnificent stairway which led from the royal palace to the Temple, there was no more spirit in her, she was overcome with extreme astonishment. V. 6. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. V. 7. Howbeit, I believed not the words, she had not been able to believe that the situation as reported to her was possible, until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me, the reality far surpassed the most extravagant reports brought to her; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. V. 8. Happy are thy men, they should consider themselves fortunate, lucky, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee and that hear thy wisdom. V. 9. Blessed be the Lord, thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel, as an evidence of His favor and mercy; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee king to do judgment and justice, to rule wisely and to execute justice. Thus this heathen queen, overcome by the evidence before her eyes, acknowledged and confessed the true God, as an example to many a person who disregarded better opportunities of becoming acquainted with His wisdom and power, Matt. 12, 42. V. 10. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, almost two and one half million dollars, and of spices very great store, and precious stones; there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. "The spices were principally the famous Arabian balm, which was largely exported; according to Josephus the balm-shrub was introduced into Palestine by the queen of Sheba." (Lange.) V. 11. And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug-trees, the sandal-wood prized so highly throughout the Orient for its fragrance, and precious stones. V. 12. And the king made of the almug-trees pillars for the house of the Lord, apparently balustrades for the stairways, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers, stringed instruments with sounding-boards. There came no such almug-trees nor were seen unto this day, the wood came in unusual abundance. V. 13. And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty, in conformity with his power and wealth, according to the custom of Oriental monarchs. So she turned and went into her own country, she and her servants. Mark: From the example of the queen of Sheba it is clear that all those are blessed who have learned and know the secret of Jesus Christ, the Savior.

Solomon's Riches and Luxury. — V. 14. Now, the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year, from all sources, was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, far over eleven million dollars, at the lowest estimate, v. 15. beside that he had of the merchantmen, the smaller itinerant merchants and pedlers, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants, the wealthy wholesalers, and of all the kings of Arabia, tributary kings of the smaller countries, and of the governors of the country, chap. 4, 7—19. V. 16. And King Solomon made two hundred targets, large square shields, of beaten gold, six hundred shekels of gold went to one target, the framework of the shields being covered with heavy gold-plates. V. 17. And he made three hundred shields, those of the smaller size, with round or oval bodies, of beaten gold, in the same heavy gold-plating; three pound of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon, which served as his arsenal. V. 18. Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, inlaid or decorated with carved pieces of this costly material, and overlaid it with the best gold. V. 19. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind, its back was bent back and rounded at the top; and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, that is, arm-rests, and two lions stood beside the stays, very likely carved of wood overlaid with gold. V. 20. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps, two to each step, facing each other; there was not the like made in any kingdom. It was only in later ages that more costly thrones were produced. V. 21. And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon, it was very low in value on account of its great abundance. V. 22. For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram, a number of ships on the Mediterranean which made regular trips to Spain, with its rich silver mines. Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks, all these being gotten in Spain and in the African countries along the Mediterranean. V. 23. So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom; none of his contemporaries

equaled him in this respect. V. 24. **And all the earth sought to Solomon,** embassies from every part of the known world came to visit him, **to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.** V. 25. **And they,** according to custom, **brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments,** beautiful and costly clothes, **and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year,** their respect for Solomon being so great that they made the giving of presents an annual custom. V. 26. **And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen,** chap. 4, 26, **whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots and with the king at Jerusalem.** V. 27. **And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones,** as abundant and therefore as little valued, **and cedars made he to be as the sycomore-trees,** the sycomore-figs, **that are in the vale, for abundance;** the most precious wood was as plentiful in Jerusalem as common building-timber. V. 28. **And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt,** which was noted for its fine horses, **and linen yarn,** literally, "a troop, a multitude"; **the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price,** every troop, or shipment, was delivered at a certain contracted price. V. 29. **And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver,** that was the price of each one, **and an horse for an hundred and fifty,** almost one hundred dollars; **and so for all the kings of the Hittites and for the kings of Syria,** most of them tributary to Solomon, to whom the Egyptians also sold horses and chariots, **did they bring them out by their means,** literally, "through their hands," without middlemen, by direct sale and delivery. It seems that the horses were brought to a town on the boundary of Egypt and Palestine, and distributed from there to the various purchasers, among whom Solomon was the most prominent. Note: All the almost unbelievable wealth of Solomon is as nothing beside the heavenly, eternal glory which Christ gives to those who are in truth His servants.

CHAPTER 11.

Solomon's Defection and Death.

Solomon's Love of Women and Idolatry. V. 1. **But King Solomon loved many strange women,** foreigners, non-Israelites, **together with,** that is, beside, **the daughter of Pharaoh,** who was his first wife, **women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites,** the tribes east, northeast, and south of the Dead Sea, **Zidonians, and Hittites,** tribes to the northwest and north of Palestine; v. 2. **of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods,** Ex. 34, 16; Deut. 7, 3. 4; 17, 17. **Solomon clave unto these in love,** he maintained friendly relations with these nations for the purpose of increasing his harem, thereby becoming the leader among the Oriental monarchs also in this respect. V. 3. **And he had seven hundred wives, princesses,** members of noble families, who added splendor to his court, **and three hundred concubines,** such an immense harem being considered an evidence of unlimited wealth among Oriental princes. **And his wives turned away his heart,** they influenced him in such a manner as to weaken his allegiance to the true God. V. 4. **For it came to pass, when Solomon was old,** when he lost his youthful energy of spirit and heart, **that his wives turned away his heart after other gods,** causing him to become indifferent toward the strict and exclusive worship of Jehovah in Israel and more indulgent with regard to the heathen worship still maintained by the foreigners; **and his heart was not perfect with the Lord, his God,** it no longer belonged to the Lord in undivided loyalty, **as was the heart of David, his father.** V. 5. **For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians,** he did not hinder the cult of this idol, **and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites,** an idol whose worship was connected with revolting rites, whereas the cult of Ashtoreth was probably connected with indecencies. V. 6. **And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David, his father;** he did not maintain the full and complete allegiance to the Lord which was expected of him; although he did not himself renounce Jehovah worship, he permitted the public worship of the heathen divinities. V. 7. **Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab,** their god of war and of fire, **in the hill that is before Jerusalem,** the Mount of Olives, **and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon,** probably another name for Milcom. V. 8. **And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burned incense and sacrificed unto their gods,** having Solomon's full permission to continue to follow their idolatrous customs. V. 9. **And the Lord was angry with Solomon,** His displeasure broke out very strongly against him, **because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,** chap. 3, 5; 9, 2, v. 10. **and had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods,**

chap. 6, 12; 9, 6. **But he kept not that which the Lord commanded.** V. 11. **Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee,** because this was come into his mind, because he was engaged in this matter which was so displeasing to the Lord, **and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and will give it to thy servant,** to one of his subjects, his inferior. V. 12. **Notwithstanding in thy days,** during Solomon's lifetime, **I will not do it for David, thy father's, sake, but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.** V. 13. **Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom,** he intended still to show his merciful goodness, **but will give one tribe to thy son for David, My servant's, sake and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen,** on account of the promise 2 Sam. 7, 12; for the selection of Jerusalem as a place of worship was independent of any man's actions. Solomon here serves as a warning example to all believers. Many a person who has learned to know the Lord has become a backslider and has turned again to the world and its pleasures. Let every one who standeth take heed lest he fall!

Solomon's Adversaries and Death. — V. 14. **And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon,** one of those who imperiled the peace of the kingdom and reminded Solomon of the fact that he owed the peace of his reign entirely to the grace of God, **Hadad the Edomite; he was of the king's seed in Edom,** of royal descent. V. 15. **For it came to pass, when David was in Edom,** 2 Sam. 8, 14, **and Joab, the captain of the host, was gone up to bury the slain,** those that were killed when the Edomites invaded the country, **after he had smitten every male in Edom,** all those who bore arms, all this taking place during a period of six months, v. 16. **(for six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom,)** v. 17. **that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt,** at a time when the predecessor of Solomon's father-in-law reigned there, **Hadad being yet a little child.** V. 18. **And they arose out of Midian,** on the west side of the Elanitic Gulf, in the southern part of Edom, **and came to Paran,** the desert between Sinai and the southern boundary of Canaan; **and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt,** seeking refuge with him; **which gave him an house and appointed him victuals,** the necessary food for himself and his companions, **and gave him land,** showing true hospitality to his visitors. V. 19. **And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes, the queen,** the chief of the king's wives and the mistress of the harem. V. 20. **And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath, his son, whom Tahpenes,** probably at a special family feast, Gen. 21, 8, **weaned in Pharaoh's house; and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh,** being educated with the princes of Egypt and ranking with them. V. 21. **And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab, the captain of the host, was dead,** his two most dangerous enemies thus being removed, **Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart that I may go to mine own country.** He sought his dismissal, since the return to his own country now seemed safe. V. 22. **Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country?** He was sure that no breach of hospitality had occurred. **And he answered, Nothing,** he had nothing to complain of on that score; **howbeit, let me go in any wise,** a request which Pharaoh undoubtedly did not refuse. So Hadad, as a kind of Bedouin chieftain, was able to stir up a good deal of trouble on the boundary. V. 23. **And God stirred him** (Solomon) **up another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer, king of Zobah,** at the time of David's campaign in the north, 2 Sam. 8, 3; v. 24. **and he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band when David slew them of Zobah. And they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus,** usurping the power in that part of Syria. V. 25. **And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did; and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.** As the power and fame of Solomon were declining, these men became bolder in their enmity and probably organized border raids, which were very unpleasant to the king. V. 26. **And Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda,** in the mountains of Ephraim, **Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king;** it was an actual, open rebellion of a subject against the constituted authority. V. 27. **And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo,** the citadel or fortress of Jerusalem, particularly of the upper city, **and repaired the breaches of the city of David, his father,** by walling up a ravine which might have afforded enemies access to the city. V. 28. **And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor,** an energetic, capable man; **and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he did** his work well, he accomplished what he set out to do, **he made him ruler over all the**

charge of the house of Joseph, the overseer of the levy of men out of the tribe of Ephraim. It is probable that the use of men of Ephraim for this work nourished the spirit of rebellion which Jeroboam afterwards used for his benefit. V. 29. **And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, when he had entered upon his work as superintendent, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he, Ahijah, had clad himself with a new garment,** a large square piece of cloth, thrown over the shoulders and almost covering the entire body in the daytime and used at night for a coverlet; **and they two were alone in the field.** V. 30. **And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him,** he took hold of it with a firm grasp, **and rent it in twelve pieces.** V. 31. **And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces; for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee,** the northern tribes being known as the Ten Tribes or Israel, more in a symbolic than in a literal way of speaking, v. 32 (**but he shall have one tribe for My servant David's sake, Benjamin and the cities of Simeon being counted with Judah, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel,**) v. 33. **because that they have forsaken Me,** the people having taken their cue from the king and indulged in the idol worship which he permitted the members of his harem, **and have worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, and Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways, to do that which is right in Mine eyes, and to keep My statutes and My judgments, as did David, his father.** V. 34. **Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him prince, ruler, all the days of his life for David, My servant's sake, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes;** v. 35. **but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.** V. 36. **And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David, My servant, for whose sake all these merciful concessions were made, may have a light alway before Me in Jerusalem, for the upholding of his family, for the continuance of his race, the city which I have chosen Me to put My name there.** V. 37. **And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel,** the position which he was seeking even at that time. V. 38. **And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in My ways, and do that is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as David, My servant, did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house,** the dynasty founded by him would be well established, **as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee,** giving him the dominion for which he was striving. V. 39. **And I will for this,** on account of the defection practised by Solomon, **afflict the seed of David, but not forever.** The descendants of David were to suffer humiliation, but only until such a time as the Lord considered best. V. 40. **Solomon sought therefore,** having heard of this prediction, **to kill Jeroboam,** who probably proceeded to incite actual rebellion at once, vv. 26. 27. **And Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak, king of Egypt,** a ruler hostile to the kingdom of Judah, **and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.** V. 41. **And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?** This was a secular book containing a history of the reign of Solomon, similar to that referred to 2 Chron. 9, 29, from which the inspired writers took no more material. V. 42. **And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years,** his entire age therefore not exceeding sixty by many years. V. 43. **And Solomon slept with his fathers,** having evidently turned back to the Lord in true repentance, **and was buried in the city of David, his father. And Rehoboam, his son, whose mother was Naamah the Ammonitess,** chap. 14, 21. 31, **reigned in his stead.** Like Solomon, many a brand was snatched from the burning by God's grace and again made a partaker of all His blessings.

CHAPTER 12.

The Division of the Kingdom.

REHOBOAM'S FOOLISH ANSWER. — V. 1. **And Rehoboam went to Shechem,** in the northern part of Ephraim's territory, and even then a center of the northern tribes; **for all Israel,** the ten tribes outside of Judah and Benjamin, **were come to Shechem to make him king,** to consider the question of recognizing him as king. V. 2. **And it came to pass, when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt,** chap. 11, 40, **heard of it,** (**for he was fled from the presence of King Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt,**) v. 3. **that they sent and called him.** It appears, from 2 Chron. 10, 2, that Jeroboam had returned to his native country after the news of Solomon's

death reached Egypt, and it was therefore an easy matter to call him. **And Jeroboam, who** promptly took the lead in the negotiations, **and all the congregation of Israel came and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,** v. 4. **Thy father made our yoke grievous,** namely, the yoke of labor, the burden of servile work, the heavy taxation for the many public buildings and improvements; **now, therefore, make thou the grievous service of thy father and his heavy yoke which he put upon us lighter,** by omitting the customary work by conscription, which, however, they had not found burdensome before, **and we will serve thee,** acknowledging him as king. V. 5. **And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me.** He wanted time to deliberate, to discuss the situation from every angle. **And the people departed,** readily granting him the desired time. V. 6. **And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon, his father, while he yet lived,** the members of his council, or cabinet, who had always been in immediate attendance upon the king, **and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?** V. 7. **And they spake unto him, saying,** giving to the king the advice based upon sound experience, **If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, for this one day only, and wilt serve them,** yielding to their will for the present moment, **and answer them,** heeding their demand, **and speak good words to them,** tactful and kind, **then they will be thy servants forever,** that would be the probable outcome of the negotiations. V. 8. **But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him,** his rash and imperious character refused to accept the proposal, **and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him and which stood before him,** courtiers in attendance upon the king who were anxious to obtain his favor. V. 9. **And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?** V. 10. **And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him,** noting the trend of his thought and ready to flatter his ambition, **saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins,** that is, As the size of the little finger is to that of the loin, so was the power of Solomon to that of Rehoboam, the latter feeling able to compel the people to do his will and to carry out his ambitious plans. V. 11. **And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy load, I will add to your yoke,** he would carry out the conscription with greater severity; **my father hath chastised you with whips,** using only ordinary means to enforce obedience, **but I will chastise you with scorpions,** with the thorn-whips used for criminals; . he would use the most extraordinary and severe means. V. 12. **So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.** V. 13. **And the king answered the people roughly,** he gave them a hard and harsh answer, that of a tyrant, **and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him,** v. 14. **and spake to them after the counsel of the young men,** the advice which his tyrannical mind had received with such pleasure, **saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.** The answer was foolish from every point of view and was bound to stimulate rebellious inclinations. V. 15. **Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people,** gave no heed to their demand for the reduction of their burdens; **for the cause was from the Lord,** He so shaped events that the foolishnes of Rehoboam resulted in his ruin, **that He might perform His saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,** chap. 11, 11. 31. Whatever is done in the counsel of princes and statesmen, in the history of nations, is done by God's will or permission, for it is He who rules the universe.

Jeroboam King over Israel. — V. 16. **So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them,** paid no heed to their demands, **the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! the proverbial call bidding every man to go home. Now see to thine own house, David!** Rehoboam was told that he should make arrangements to rule over his own tribe as best he might, for Israel would not acknowledge him as king. The rebellious shout with which the secession was formally proclaimed, showed the deep-rooted antipathy of the northern tribes against Judah and the kings out of that tribe, which, in turn, was caused by their indifference toward Jehovah and the Law given by Him. **So Israel departed unto their tents.** V. 17. **But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah,** members of the northern tribes who had settled in the southern part of Canaan, **Rehoboam reigned over them;** here he was acknowledged as king without question. V. 18. **Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute,** chap. 4, 6, who was to treat with the rebels and appease them, as the officer in charge of all work by conscription; **and**

all Israel, in a rebellious rage, stoned him with stones that he died. Therefore King Rehoboam, who had remained in the neighborhood of Shechem, made speed, he had to make use of all his power and energy, to get him up to his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. V. 19. So Israel rebelled against, and thus seceded from, the house of David unto this day, the time when this account was written. V. 20. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, when their representatives brought the news to their several homes, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, a special assembly having been called for the purpose of choosing a king, and made him king over all Israel, considering him, with his grievance against Solomon and his family, the logical man to hold this position. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only, which included Benjamin and the cities of Simeon. V. 21. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, trained soldiers, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, to subdue the rebellion by force of arms. V. 22. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, v. 23. Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, all those who had cast their lot with the southern monarchy, saying, v. 24. Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, not undertake the proposed campaign, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel. Return every man to his house; for this thing is from Me, the events now happening came about thus by divine dispensation. They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, they obeyed His command, and returned to depart, they desisted from their plan, according to the word of the Lord. V. 25. Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim and dwelt therein, making this city his residence; and went out from thence and built Penuel. In both cases the fortifying of the cities is referred to, for Jeroboam intended to secure his territory against attacks from the south. V. 26. And Jeroboam, considering ways and means of bringing about a firmer union among the northern tribes, said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David, since the circumstances were such as he saw before his eyes; v. 27. if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam, king of Judah. He probably gauged the character, the fickleness, of the people correctly. V. 28. Whereupon the king took counsel and made two calves of gold, he cast these molten images as the result of his deliberations, and said unto them, the people of Israel, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; they had, in his opinion, made the festival journeys often enough, he wanted them to cease; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt! Cp. Ex. 32, 4—8. While Jeroboam may have intended the images to represent Jehovah, the true God, it was a false worship which he hereby introduced, for the Lord had chosen Jerusalem as the place where His Temple was to stand, and it was there that the priests and Levites were busy in His service. V. 29. And he set the one in Bethel, near the southern boundary of the northern tribes, and the other put he in Dan, in the extreme northern part of Israel's territory. V. 30. And this thing became a sin, it resulted in open idolatry; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan, the great distance did not hinder them from making their pilgrimages to this city. V. 31. And he made an house of high places, a temple, or shrine, for the images, in both cities, and made priests of the lowest of the people, literally, "from the mass of the people," from all classes, which were not of the sons of Levi. He therefore transgressed the commandment of God also in this respect. V. 32. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, instead of the seventh selected by the Lord, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, the Feast of Tabernacles, the harvest festival proper; and he offered upon the altar, he ascended the incline to the large altar while the priests offered the sacrifice. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made; and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. V. 33. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart, without the command of Jehovah; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel, to take the place of at least one of the great festivals commanded by Jehovah; and he offered upon the altar and burned incense, he deliberately planned and made ready to take part in the worship which he had instituted. All apparent worship of Jehovah which men devise in their own hearts, all sacrifices and works which are made by the commandment of men and are intended to merit the favor of God are an abomination before the Lord and a transgression of the First Commandment.

CHAPTER 13.

Jeroboam and the Prophet of Judah.

Jeroboam Reproved for His Sin. — V. 1. **And, behold, there came a man of God, a prophet, out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel,** like a power which drove and compelled him to make known the Lord's will; **and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense,** presuming upon a right which was not his. V. 2. **And he,** the prophet, **cried against the altar in the word of the Lord,** his addressing the altar making his words all the more significant and emphatic, **and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee,** the greatest possible desecration which could come to an altar, Num. 19, 16. The prophecy was literally fulfilled, as history relates, 2 Kings 23, 15—20. V. 3. **And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken: Behold, the altar shall be rent,** utterly destroyed, torn to pieces, **and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out,** the fat of the sacrifices being mixed with the ashes, to indicate that the entire worship was unclean. V. 4. **And it came to pass, when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar,** in an angry and threatening gesture, **saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand which he put forth against him dried up,** paralyzed or stiffened in a peculiar manner, **so that he could not pull it in again to him.** The miracle had the effect of terrifying the king's attendants and keeping them from executing his orders. V. 5. **The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord,** all of which served to substantiate the prophet's words and to terrify the king, at least for the time being. V. 6. **And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the Lord, thy God,** literally, "Soften His face," which was now turned against him in hardness and anger, beseeching Him so earnestly that He cannot refuse, **and pray for me that my hand may be restored me again,** so that he would again have its full use. **And the man of God besought the Lord,** he succeeded in softening Jehovah's hard face by the fervor of his intercession, **and the king's hand was restored him again and became as it was before,** he once more had control of it. V. 7. **And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward,** a present, or gift, to win him over to his side, and to weaken or remove the impression made by the awful threat; for Jeroboam was by no means repentant. V. 8. **And the man of God said unto the king,** refusing the hand of fellowship extended by an idolater, **If thou wilt give me half thine house,** half of all that he possessed, **I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place;** v. 9. **for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest,** lest some one, knowing of his passing, might detain him. V. 10. **So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.** It is God's will, most emphatically expressed, that His servants should not fellowship with such as teach, or adhere to, false doctrine.

The Prophet Punished for His Disobedience. — V. 11. **Now, there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel,** a member of the great brotherhood of prophets found in Israel since the time of Samuel, who had, however, joined the forces of Jeroboam; **and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel,** one son after the other coming forward to give his account; **the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.** V. 12. **And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen,** and taken note of, **what way the man of God went which came from Judah.** V. 13. **And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass,** evidently the only one which he possessed. **So they saddled him the ass;** and **he rode thereon,** v. 14. **and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak,** under the terebinth which was afterward connected with the happening here related. **And he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.** It was a very unfortunate delay which permitted the prophet of Bethel to come up with him. V. 15. **Then he said unto him, Come home with me and eat bread,** enjoy the hospitality and the fellowship of the old prophet. V. 16. **And he said, I may not return with thee nor go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place;** v. 17. **for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.** The manner in which he at first withstood the temptation was most praiseworthy. V. 18. **He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art, and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord,** by His express command, **saying, Bring him back with thee into thine**

house that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him, just as many a false prophet in our days deceives men by his glib falsehoods, especially by referring to special divine revelations and visions which he claims to have had. V. 19. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house and drank water. He gave way to the deceiver without investigating his claims thoroughly. V. 20. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, while the meal was still in progress, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back, this time in a true revelation. V. 21. And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord, thy God, commanded thee, v. 22. but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers; it was considered a great misfortune at that time to be buried among strangers. V. 23. And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back, the loan of the beast being intended, as it seems, to atone for the falsehood by which he had effected the return of the Judean prophet. V. 24. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way and slew him. And his carcass was cast in the way, thrown down from the beast which he had been riding, and the ass stood by it; the lion also stood by the carcass, an indication that this was an extraordinary occurrence. V. 25. And, behold, men passed by and saw the carcass cast in the way and the lion standing by the carcass; and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. V. 26. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord; therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, literally, "crushed him," for this is done with one stroke of the powerful paws, and slain him according to the word of the Lord which He spake unto him. V. 27. And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass, the one obtained in place of that taken by the man of God. And they saddled him. V. 28. And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass. The lion had not eaten the carcass nor torn the ass, had not so much as fetched one blow at him, a most unusual thing and one which proved it to be a miracle. V. 29. And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back. And the old prophet came to the city to mourn and to bury him. V. 30. And he laid his carcass in his own grave, in the sepulcher reserved for his own family, treating the dead man like a near and dear relative, And they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! This was the usual form of lamentation in the case of a very close friend or relative. V. 31. And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulcher wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones; v. 32. for the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, the altars and buildings used for idol worship, shall surely come to pass. Because the dead man had been a true prophet, therefore the old man wanted to have the honor of resting next to him in death. V. 33. After this thing, this happening, Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, he was not repentant, but made again of the lowest of the people, from the mass, from all classes, priests of the high places, whosoever would, every one who had an inclination that way, he consecrated him, literally, "he filled his hand," inducted him into office by placing into his hands those pieces of the sacrifice which belonged to Jehovah; and he became one of the priests of the high places. V. 34. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, it was charged against him, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth. His guilt brought upon him and upon his entire family the punishment of Jehovah, the final result being the extermination of his house. That is the way of the disobedient, of the unbelievers, who disregard the warnings and the punishments of Jehovah and persist in their evil ways.

CHAPTER 14.

The Reign of Jeroboam and Rehoboam.

Ahijah's Prophecy against Jeroboam. — V. 1. At that time, after Jeroboam had refused to repent of his evil ways, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick. It was evidently the crown prince, the successor to the throne, who became ill. V. 2. And Jeroboam said to his wife, the mother being naturally very vitally interested in the welfare of her son, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, mainly by putting on such garments as would probably deceive the average person, that thou

be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh; behold, there is Ahijah, the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people. By concealing the identity of his wife, on account of his having ignored the warning to be faithful to Jehovah, chap. 11, 38. 39, Jeroboam intended to obtain a favorable answer from the prophet. V. 3. And take with thee, namely, as presents to the seer, 1 Sam. 9, 8, ten loaves and cracknels, probably a kind of cake, and a cruse, or bottle, of honey, and go to him; he shall tell thee what shall become of the child. The presents were purposely such as any ordinary woman of the people might have brought, and Jeroboam thought he might once more receive a revelation favorable to his family by proceeding in this manner. V. 4. And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, he was on the point of turning blind; for his eyes were set by reason of his age, through paralysis of the optic nerves. Cp. 1 Sam. 4, 15. V. 5. And the Lord said unto Ahijah, revealing the entire matter to him before the arrival of Jeroboam's wife, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, to get information from the representative of the Lord; for he is sick. Thus and thus shalt thou say unto her; for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman. V. 6. And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound, the scraping, of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? The deception deserved a reproof. For I am sent to thee with heavy tidings, as a messenger of hard news, of misfortune. V. 7. Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the reproof and the prophecy being given in a rhythmical form, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over My people Israel, v. 8. and rent the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it thee, namely, the ten northern tribes, and yet thou hast not been as My servant David, who had been placed before his eyes as a model and example, chap. 11, 38, who kept My commandments, and who followed Me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in Mine eyes, v. 9. but hast done evil above all that were before thee, namely, by making idolatrous worship a national institution; for thou hast gone and made thee other gods and molten images, the two calf figures, to provoke Me to anger, and hast cast Me behind thy back, the strongest expression to denote intentional and blasphemous contempt for God; v. 10. therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, upon his family, upon all his descendants, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, exterminate them down to the very last man, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, literally, "the detained and those set free," that is, all the male members, both those that were still minors and those who were of age, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as often as a new scion arises, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone, both the shameful and the complete extermination being emphasized. V. 11. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field, out in the open country, shall the fowls of the air eat, to the disgrace of not being buried was added that of being devoured by unclean animals; for the Lord hath spoken it. V. 12. Arise thou, therefore, get thee to thine own house; and when thy feet enter into the city, namely, Tirzah, the royal residence at that time, the child shall die. V. 13. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, this being at least one word of comfort; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, be buried in an honorable fashion, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam, he had inclined to the pure and lawful worship of Jehovah. V. 14. Moreover, the Lord shall raise Him up a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day, during his reign; but what? Even now; the destruction which was to begin now would be completed at the time spoken of by Jehovah; complete annihilation was only a matter of time. V. 15. For the Lord shall smite Israel, by the attacks and inroads of heathen nations, as a reed is shaken in the water, this referring to the events of the next two centuries, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land which He gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, as a result of their captivity beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their groves, tree-trunks dedicated to the heathen goddess Astarte, provoking the Lord to anger. V. 16. And He shall give Israel up, deliver the entire nation, because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin, this expression now becoming the stock phrase to characterize the transgression of Jeroboam. V. 17. And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah, which may have been a summer residence of Jeroboam; and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died. V. 18. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord which He spake by the hand of His servant Ahijah, the prophet. V. 19. And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, the royal deeds for which he was noted, how he warred, 2 Chron. 2, 13 ff., and how

he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. V. 20. **And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years. And he slept with his fathers,** having been struck with a severe and painful illness; **and Nadab, his son, reigned in his stead.** Jeroboam evidently died in his sins. It is a terrible thing if one who once knew the Lord and received evidences of His rich favor dies the death of a godless fool.

The Rule of Rehoboam. — V. 21. **And Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign,** having thus been born one year before Solomon's accession to the throne, **and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there,** a fact which is here noted on account of the idolatry which was practised afterward on the heights of Judah. **And his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess,** the individual queen-mothers having a great influence at that time on account of the harem system, which usually brought the children more closely to the mother. V. 22. **And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.** Cp. 2 Chron. 11, 5—12, 1. This decay set in just as soon as Rehoboam had established his kingdom and fortified its boundaries. V. 23. **For they also built them high places,** altars for the purpose of idolatrous worship on prominent hills, **and images,** memorial stones usually consecrated to the heathen idol Baal, **and groves,** the wooden monuments of Astarte, the female nature divinity, **on every high hill, and under every green tree,** thick, shady trees usually being selected for that purpose, Hos. 4, 13. V. 24. **And there were also Sodomites in the land,** men or boys from the surrounding nations who permitted themselves to be prostituted in honor of the gods; **and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel,** the original Canaanitish inhabitants of the land. V. 25. **And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak, king of Egypt,** probably at the suggestion of Jeroboam, **came up against Jerusalem;** v. 26. **and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house,** the great quantities of precious metals stored there; **he even took away all; and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made,** chap. 10, 17. V. 27. **And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard,** the king's runners, **which kept the door of the king's house,** the watch at the palace gate. V. 28. **And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord, that the guard bare them,** accompanying the king in solemn procession, **and brought them back into the guard-chamber,** evidently a room in the house of the forest of Lebanon, chap. 10, 17. One commentator suggests that the highly polished copper shields, access to which was denied the common people, were intended to deceive them concerning the true state of affairs. V. 29. **Now, the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?** V. 30. **And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days,** a state of war existed as long as they both lived, which resulted in at least one pitched battle under Abijah. V. 31. **And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David,** with due honors. **And his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess,** the statement being repeated probably on account of the fact that she introduced the idol worship of Moloch in Jerusalem. **And Abijam, his son, reigned in his stead.** Men who deliberately reject the Lord and His blessings need not be surprised if they find themselves punished by God in various ways.

CHAPTER 15.

The Reign of Abijam, Asa, Nadab, and Baasha.

The Rule of Abijam in Judah. — V. 1. **Now, in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,** about four years before his death, **reigned Abijam** (or Abijah) **over Judah.** V. 2. **Three years,** a very short period, **reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom,** a granddaughter of Absalom, the son of David, and the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, who had evidently married Tamar, the daughter of Absalom. V. 3. **And he,** Abijam, **walked in all the sins of his father which he had done before him,** patterning after the wickedness of Rehoboam; **and his heart was not perfect with the Lord, his God,** it was not on the side of Jehovah in undivided allegiance, **as the heart of David, his father.** V. 4. **Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord, his God, give him a lamp in Jerusalem,** keeping his descendants on the throne of Judah, **to set up his son after him and to establish Jerusa-**

lem, chap. 11, 13. 36; v. 5. **because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord**, he observed the demands of the covenant relation, **and turned not aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.** While David's fall was very great and grievous, it did not break the covenant of Jehovah with Israel, it did not remove the foundations of God's relation toward Israel, as the idolatry of later years did. While Abijam outwardly maintained and observed the rites of Jehovah worship, it was not a matter of real belief of the heart with him, but a case of dead orthodoxy, combined with a tolerance of idol worship in his country. V. 6. **And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life**, this condition continuing under Abijam. V. 7. **Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.** V. 8. **And Abijam**, after his short reign, **slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa, his son, reigned in his stead.** In this case also it is true that apostasy is often followed by various misfortunes, for God will not be mocked.

The Rule of Asa in Judah. — V. 9. **And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam, king of Israel**, parts of years being counted as full years by the Jewish chroniclers, **reigned Asa over Judah.** V. 10. **And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.** Maachah was really his grandmother, but she retained her position as most influential person, either as mother of the king who had just died and as one possessed of great energy, or because Asa's mother was dead and she took her place in the palace. V. 11. **And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David, his father**, patterning his life after the example of his illustrious ancestor. V. 12. **And he took away the sodomites**, the public male prostitutes who had come in under Rehoboam, **out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.** V. 13. **And also Maachah, his mother** (grandmother), **even her he removed from being queen**, from occupying her position of honor and influence at court, **because she had made an idol in a grove**, erected a monument and a picture to Astarte, the female god of the heathen nations; **and Asa destroyed her idol**, cutting it down, **and burned it by the brook Kidron**, the ashes being thrown into the brook, where they were carried away. V. 14. **But the high places**, some of which at least, although unlawfully, were dedicated to Jehovah, **were not removed**; Asa's reforms were not quite able to accomplish so much; **nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days**, he served Jehovah with undivided allegiance. V. 15. **And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated**, presents consecrated to Jehovah, probably the spoil of wars, **and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the Lord, silver and gold and vessels.** Thus the treasure-chambers of the Temple, which had been plundered by Shishak, were again partly filled. V. 16. **And there was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel**, the insurgent against Nadab, Jeroboam's successor, **all their days.** V. 17. **And Baasha, king of Israel, went up against Judah and built Ramah**, in the tribe of Benjamin, some six to eight miles north of Jerusalem, **that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa, king of Judah.** He wanted to cut off traffic, obstruct commerce, and thus practically to blockade Jerusalem from the north. V. 18. **Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord**, that which had again been deposited there by his father Abijam, **and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants**, his representatives in the embassy which he had planned; **and King Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying**, v. 19. **There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father; behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha, king of Israel**, both divisions of the former large kingdom having sought an alliance with the mighty Syrian ruler, **that he may depart from me.** V. 20. **So Benhadad**, convinced, no doubt, by the large sum sent by Asa that he was the richer and mightier ally, **hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon**, a fortified city in the extreme northern part of Israel's territory, **and Dan**, also in that region, settled by the Danites, **and Abelbeth-maachah, and all Cinneroth**, the district west and northwest of Lake Gennesaret, **with all the land of Naphtali**, for this was the territory of that tribe. V. 21. **And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah**, he thought it best to change his hostile attitude, lest he be crushed between two enemies, **and dwelt in Tirzah**, which was the royal residence at least during a part of the time. V. 22. **Then King Asa**, who was now free from the menace which had threatened his country, **made a proclamation throughout all Judah**, calling upon all able-bodied men to help in this emergency; **none was exempted; and they took away the stones of Ramah and the timber thereof wherewith Baasha**

had builded, the building material which he had gathered there; and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah, the former being about two and a quarter and the latter some thirteen miles from Ramah. Thus he fortified this section of his kingdom. V. 23. The rest of all the acts of Asa and all his might, the conspicuous deeds of his bravery and prowess, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? Nevertheless, in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. Cp. 2 Chron. 16, 12. V. 24. And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, his father, all by the promise of God; and Jehoshaphat, his son, reigned in his stead. It seems that Asa, unlike some of the other kings of that age, always repented of his trespasses. God has patience with the weakness of His children and is glad to help them up when they have stumbled.

The Rule of Nadab and Baasha in Israel. V. 25. And Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa, king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years, it being necessary here once more to regard parts of years as whole ones. V. 26. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, in stubbornness and idolatry, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. V. 27. And Baasha, the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha, who was probably an army chief, smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, having been retaken by them when the power of Israel was on the wane; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon, in order to recover possession of it. V. 28. Even in the third year of Asa, king of Judah, did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead, as a usurper of the throne. V. 29. And it came to pass, when he reigned, after he had entered upon his rule, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam, putting to death all the members of his whole race; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the Lord, in order to fulfil the word of the prophecy, which He spake by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, chap. 14, 9—16, v. 30. because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger. V. 31. Now, the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? V. 32. And there was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days. V. 33. In the third year of Asa, king of Judah, began Baasha, the son of Ahijah, to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, forcing the people to acknowledge him as king or being proclaimed by his soldiers, twenty and four years. V. 34. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, in rebellion against the Lord, in idolatry. This was an abomination before the Lord. All those who are called to be leaders in the spiritual Israel and shepherds in the Church, but who lead the people of God into false doctrine, make themselves liable to damnation.

CHAPTER 16.

The Reign of Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab.

The Rule of Baasha and Elah in Israel. V. 1. Then, when it was evident that Baasha was guilty of the same wickedness as Jeroboam, the word of the Lord came to Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying, v. 2. Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, from a very low position among the people to that of commander in the army and finally to that of king, and made thee prince over My people Israel, for he could not have carried out his ambitious plans if they had been contrary to the purposes of Jehovah, and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made My people Israel to sin, by fostering idolatry in their midst, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, for the jealous God, being the only true God, cannot bear a rival beside Him, v. 3. behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, by cutting off and exterminating his family, and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, of whose family not one member survived. V. 4. Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. It was the same terrible curse which had been pronounced upon Jeroboam, chap. 14, 11. V. 5. Now, the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, the extent of his military resources, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? V. 6. So Baasha slept with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah, which he also had made his residence; and Elah, his son, reigned in his stead. V. 7. And also, a thought being added here to prevent a misunderstanding, by the hand of the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, came the word of the Lord against Baasha and against his house, even for all the evil that he

did in the sight of the Lord, as noted above, v. 2, **in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam,** guilty of the same idolatrous practises, **and because he killed him,** for the extermination of Jeroboam's family by Baasha had not been done by divine command or for the purpose of eradicating idolatry, but was an arbitrary, selfish act on the part of Baasha. V. 8. **In the twenty and sixth year of Asa, king of Judah, began Elah, the son of Baasha, to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years;** he reigned one full year and a fraction of the second. V. 9. **And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots,** an important and mighty officer in his army, **conspired against him as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah,** who probably was in the conspiracy and had purposely arranged this banquet and drinking-bout. V. 10. **And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa, king of Judah,** this being all the easier since the army apparently was in the field against the Philistines, **and reigned in his stead,** he proclaimed himself king. V. 11. **And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne,** for he lost no time in carrying out his wicked designs, **that he slew all the house of Baasha,** down to the very last man; **he left him not one that pisseth against the wall,** neither of his kinsfolks nor of his friends; in order to secure himself against any possible revengers of blood, no man was left alive. V. 12. **Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord which He spake against Baasha by Jehu, the prophet,** his act being done not by God's command, but in accordance with His threat, which was thereby fulfilled, v. 13. **for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah, his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities,** with their worship of the golden calves erected by Jeroboam. V. 14. **Now, the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** This story shows with what jealous seriousness God watches over His honor. All the threats which God has uttered against the godless, all the promises which He has spoken concerning His children, will surely be fulfilled.

The Rule of Zimri in Israel. — V. 15. **In the twenty and seventh year of Asa, king of Judah, did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah,** so long he was in undisturbed possession of the throne. **And the people,** the army of Israel, **were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines,** and which Nadab had already tried to recover from the hands of the enemy. V. 16. **And the people that were encamped heard say,** the rumor or the report came to the army, **Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king; wherefore all Israel,** as represented in the army, the military party, **made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp,** they proclaimed him ruler over the northern nation. V. 17. **And Omri went up from Gibbethon and all Israel with him,** he went on a campaign against the usurper of the throne, **and they besieged Tirzah.** V. 18. **And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken,** it being impossible for him to hold out against the besieging force, **that he went into the palace of the king's house,** the citadel, the highest and strongest of the buildings included in the royal palace, **and burned the king's house over him with fire and died,** preferring this death to that at the hands of the victorious army, v. 19. **for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did to make Israel to sin;** for even in these few days he had shown that he had no intention of doing away with the calf-worship introduced by Jeroboam. V. 20. **Now, the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought,** the manner in which he planned the removal of Baasha, **are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 21. **Then were the people of Israel,** the entire northern nation, **divided into two parts,** the faction represented by the army and the party of the people: **half of the people,** the non-military party, **followed Tibni, the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half,** the military party, **followed Omri.** V. 22. **But the people that followed Omri prevailed,** his party gained the ascendency, **against the people that followed Tibni, the son of Ginath. So Tibni died,** either by assassination or in battle, **and Omri reigned,** the opposition having no other man to take his place. All men who are blinded by sin act like the kings of Israel here described. They have warning examples in great number before their eyes, but they obstinately continue on their way to their own destruction.

The Rule of Omri and of Ahab. — V. 23. **In the thirty and first year of Asa, king of Judah, began Omri to reign over Israel,** the intervening years having been spent in civil war, **twelve years,** during eight of which he was the sole ruler. **Six years reigned he in Tirzah,** so long he retained this city as his residence. V. 24. **And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer,** at that time its owner, **for two talents of silver** (between three and four thousand dollars), **and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.** This city was located

east of Tirzah, northeast of Shechem, on a "beautiful round mountain, covered with splendid trees, and lying in a valley or basin enclosed with mountains, commanding a glorious prospect of the fruitful valley and the heights and villages surrounding it." "The hill on which Samaria was situated rose some three hundred feet above the surrounding valley on all sides except the east, and when fortified, presented such an impregnable front that it took even an Assyrian army three years to capture it." 2) V. 25. **But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him,** he went farther in the open practise of idolatry than all his predecessors. V. 26. **For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities,** the idolatry and the calf-worship being continued with increased vigor. V. 27. **Now, the rest of the acts of Omri which he did,** those which are not connected with his relation to the covenant of Jehovah, **and his might that he showed,** his military prowess, **are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 28. **So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria; and Ahab, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 29. **And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa, king of Judah, began Ahab, the son of Omri, to reign over Israel. And Ahab, the son of Omri, reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.** His accession to the throne introduced a period of Israel's history noted for its general wickedness. V. 30. **And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him,** exceeding even the wickedness of his father. V. 31. **And it came to pass as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,** the horror of the situation being brought out still more strongly by a parenthetical question in the Hebrew text, **that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians,** worthy daughter of a father who was a false priest and an assassin, **and went and served Baal, and worshiped him.** Baal was the chief male god of the Phenicians and the Canaanites, considered the source of physical life and of all propagation in nature. V. 32. **And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal,** in a special temple erected to this idol, **which he had built in Samaria.** V. 33. **And Ahab made a grove,** he erected a pillar to the female idol of the Canaanites, Astarte, whose worship was connected with immoral practises; **and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.** V. 34. **In his days,** as an example of the utter disregard of God's will which then prevailed, **did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho,** which was to have remained in ruins; **he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his firstborn,** who died when he began work, **and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub,** who died at the completion of the work, **according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun,** Josh. 6, 26. False worship, false doctrine, will not be confined to just one point of wickedness, but will soon extend beyond all bounds and result in gross idolatry. If a person repudiates one point of Christian doctrine, the chances are that he will soon be led into unbelief and denial of God's truth.

2) Barton, *Archeology and the Bible*, 123.

CHAPTER 17.

Elijah Prophet in Israel.

The Famine. — V. 1. **And Elijah** ("My God is Jehovah") **the Tishbite,** a native, so far as can be determined, of Galilee, but having been removed to Gilead, where he lived as a stranger, **who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand,** a most solemn oath, emphasizing his position as servant and ambassador of Jehovah, **there shall not be dew,** which was usually very heavy in Palestine, **nor rain these years but according to my word.** It was a threat of punishment for the sin of idolatry and at the same time an evidence against the worship of Baal, to whom was ascribed the controlling power of nature. Drought and barrenness were a proof of the impotence of the idol and a direct punishment of God for the sin of idolatry, Lev. 26, 19. 20; Deut. 11, 16. 17. V. 2. **And the word of the Lord came unto him,** Elijah, **saying,** v. 3. **Get thee hence and turn thee eastward,** out of the reach of Ahab's and Jezebel's anger, **and hide thyself by the brook Cherith,** apparently a perennial stream and not an arroyo, carrying water only in the rainy season, **that is before Jordan,** somewhere on the western side, its exact location being unknown. V. 4. **And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there,** who were to be God's messengers in supplying the prophet with food. While Elijah's life was to be sustained in this miraculous manner, he was not only to be shut off from all intercourse with men, who might have betrayed his hiding-place to the king, but he was also to be strengthened in his trust in the almighty power of Jehovah, in whose service he was engaged. V. 5. **So he went and did according unto the word of**

the Lord; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. V. 6. **And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning,** all the food which he needed to sustain life, **and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.** V. 7. **And it came to pass after a while,** after some time had elapsed, **that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land,** and the springs, in consequence, were no longer fed by the water in the hills. God has ways and means of keeping His children alive in the midst of the greatest plagues which He sends as a punishment upon the unbelieving world.

Elijah in Zarephath. — V. 8. **And the word of the Lord came unto him,** when the brook no longer furnished him water to drink, **saying,** v. 9. **Arise, get thee to Zarephath,** in the Phenician country, **which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee,** He had made provisions to take further care of His prophet, and would in due time influence her heart to do His bidding. V. 10. **So he,** Elijah, **arose, and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks,** Elijah recognizing her as a widow either by her clothes or by the fact that she was engaged in this lowly task. **And he called to her,** to find out whether she were the woman of whom the Lord had spoken, **and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink,** the vessel being his own drinking-cup, which he had carried with him from the land of Israel. V. 11. **And as she,** readily complying with his request, **was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand,** the smallest-sized loaf, in the form of a cake or bun, being understood, as such were baked in hot ashes. V. 12. **And she said, As the Lord, thy God, liveth,** her oath being in the name of Jehovah, whom she undoubtedly worshiped, although surrounded on all sides by heathen, **I have not a cake,** such as she understood Elijah to have reference to, **but an handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse,** the oil being mixed with the flour in baking; **and, behold, I am gathering two,** that is, a few, **sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son,** bake a last batch, **that we may eat it and die,** for she saw starvation staring her in the face. V. 13. **And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.** To the word of comfort was added a demand, which must have been a sore test for the woman's faith. V. 14. **For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, not be consumed, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth,** whose fruitfulness would thereby be restored and the famine broken. V. 15. **And she,** with a faith which would scarcely have been found in Israel, **went and did according to the saying of Elijah. And she and he and her house,** including not only her son, but such other relatives as partook of her bounty, **did eat many days,** a long while. V. 16. **And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which He spake by Elijah,** and with which He had reassured her. The story of this widow is used by Christ Luke 4, 25, in order to warn all men against despising His Word. God is not mocked; when men reject His message of salvation, they have but themselves to blame if they are overlooked in the distribution of spiritual blessings.

The Dead Boy Restored to Life. — V. 17. **And it came to pass after these things,** after the widow and her family had been so miraculously preserved, **that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore,** the illness took such a severe turn, **that there was no breath left in him,** the boy died. V. 18. **And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?** Her distress was so great that she was inclined to blame Elijah for the unfortunate turn of events. **Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance,** her sensitiveness causing her to believe that her own sinfulness stood out all the more strongly by contrast with the holiness of the prophet, **and to slay my son?** The woman supposed that in the same degree in which she was learning to acknowledge her sin God was taking account of it in order to punish her. V. 19. **And he,** instead of arguing with her, **said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom,** as she held him clasped tightly in her arms, **and carried him up into a loft, where he abode,** in the upper room of the house, **and laid him upon his own bed,** evidently deeply perplexed by this act of Jehovah and yet ready to wrestle for the boy's life in prayer in the loneliness of his chamber. V. 20. **And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, hast Thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son?** It was a cry of deep distress over the fact that the tribulations of the famine were now increased by this new calamity, but also a prayer of faith that God surely would not permit death to hold the boy in these circumstances. V. 21. **And he stretched himself upon the child three times,** measuring his full length over him, **and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again,** taking full possession of his entire body once more. V. 22. **And the**

Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived, he came back to life. V. 23. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, into the main part of the house, and delivered him unto his mother. And Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. V. 24. And the woman said to Elijah, who by this miracle had proved himself a type of the great Master and Lord of death, Now, by this I know that thou art a man of God, her conviction was now most assured, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth, to be accepted with implicit faith. The example of the widow of Zarephath shows that the Lord has His elect in the very midst of a reprobate people.

CHAPTER 18.

Events at Carmel.

ELIJAH REPROVES AHAB. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after many days,** three and one half years after the first announcement of the famine, Luke 4, 25; Jas. 5, 17, **that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year,** namely, the third year of his sojourn in Zarephath, **saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.** The present punishment, concerning which a number of parenthetical remarks are now inserted, was to be ended presently. V. 2. **And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab,** to present himself to ask for an interview. **And there was a sore famine in Samaria,** the lack of rain had been especially noticeable in that section of Palestine. V. 3. **And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house,** the master of the palace, the majordomo, who had charge of the entire royal household. **(Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly,** he was one of the few who still adhered to the worship of Jehovah; v. 4. **for it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord,** for it had been her aim, from the start, to abolish the worship of Jehovah in Israel, **that Obadiah took an hundred prophets,** members of the prophets' schools or societies which had been in existence since the time of Samuel, **and hid them by fifty in a cave,** probably in two caverns, in the hills of Ephraim, **and fed them with bread and water.)** V. 5. **And Ahab said unto Obadiah,** this had taken place when the famine had reached its most severe point, **Go into the land,** making a careful survey of the entire country, **unto all fountains, springs, of water, and unto all brooks; peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts,** for the lack of water would soon have forced them to kill some of the animals. V. 6. **So they,** since the need was so great, **divided the land between them to pass throughout it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.** V. 7. **And as Obadiah was in the way,** engaged in this task of finding water for the royal stables, **behold, Elijah met him;** and he knew him, the prophet being recognizable anywhere by the garments which he wore, 2 Kings 1, 7. 8, **and fell on his face,** in reverence and in fear, **and said, Art thou that, my lord Elijah?** V. 8. **And he answered him, I am. Go, tell thy lord, King Ahab, Behold, Elijah is here.** V. 9. **And he said, What have I sinned that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me?** He feared lest Ahab conclude that he had known the hiding-place of Elijah during the past years and would therefore wreak his vengeance on him. V. 10. **As the Lord, thy God, liveth, there is no nation or kingdom,** namely, of those in the entire neighborhood, **whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee,** for such was his bitterness against the prophet; **and when they said, He is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not.** In his great fear Obadiah undoubtedly overemphasized this point and became guilty of exaggeration. V. 11. **And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.** Since Ahab had looked for Elijah everywhere in vain, the danger that the sudden announcement of his presence in the immediate neighborhood would rouse him to a quick fury was very great. V. 12. **And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not,** a possibility which his anxiety caused him to mention; **and so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me,** in the supposition that he had wilfully misled the king. **But I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth,** this fact being urged to influence Elijah in his behalf. V. 13. **Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave and fed them with bread and water?** He mentioned this one example in order to impress his sincerity upon Elijah and to show him the danger of his own position. V. 14. **And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here; and he shall slay me,** since Ahab was enraged even now on account of his religious convictions. V. 15. **And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts,** He who commands the countless host of the mighty angels, **liveth, before whom I stand,** as a minister and am-

bassador, **I will surely show myself unto him to-day.** V. 16. **So Obadiah,** reassured by the definite promise of the prophet, **went to meet Ahab and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.** V. 17. **And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel,** bringing confusion and misfortune upon the people? V. 18. **And he,** turning back the accusation upon the king, **answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house,** his whole family, **in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord,** rejected the true religion with which the people had always been happy, **and thou hast followed Baalim,** the chief heathen god in the various activities ascribed to him. V. 19. **Now, therefore, send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel,** the mountain by the Mediterranean Sea, in the southern part of the territory of Asher, **and the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty,** the priests of the idol, who also acted as soothsayers, **and the prophets of the groves,** the priests of the female idol Astarte, **four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table,** receiving their entire sustenance from the queen, who was bound to establish idolatry in Israel. V. 20. **So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel,** proclaiming a great national assembly, **and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel.** In spite of Ahab's apparent scorn for Elijah, a superstitious fear caused him to agree to the prophet's words. Thus even the godless are occasionally filled with a terror which causes them to bow under the Word of God, at least outwardly.

Elijah Slays the Prophets of Baal. — V. 21. **And Elijah came unto all the people,** as they were assembled in a convenient place on the southeastern slopes of Mount Carmel, **and said, How long halt ye between two opinions,** being of a double mind, trying to harmonize the worship of Jehovah and that of Baal? **If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.** This same argument is applicable to the unionistic tendencies of our day, no matter in what connection they crop out, for all such efforts to harmonize truth and falsehood are an abomination to the Lord. **And the people answered him not a word,** their silence conceding the actual antagonism between the two religions. V. 22. **Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord,** all the rest having been either murdered or caused to cease preaching; **but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.** The priests of Astarte had apparently not appeared, having a presentiment of harm which would surely befall them if they attended this great assembly. V. 23. **Let them therefore give us two bullocks,** in order that the issue might be publicly decided; **and let them,** the priests of Baal, **choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under, and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under;** v. 24. **and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the god that answereth by fire, let him be God.** Since sacrifice was the chief expression of worship at that time, this form of deciding the issue was chosen, and since the priests of Baal were given the first opportunity to test the truth of their religion and also their choice of bullocks, it was practically impossible for them to refuse without immediately branding their religion as a huge fraud. **And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.** The proposal and the test seemed altogether fair to them. V. 25. **And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many,** he did not intend to crowd forward, but wanted to give them every advantage; **and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.** V. 26. **And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it,** which included the proper dissecting of the members according to the requirements of the ritual, **and called on the name of Baal from morning,** when the meeting opened, **even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us,** literally, "hearken unto us," answer us. **But there was no voice, nor any that answered,** literally, "And not was there a voice, and not was there an answerer." **And they leaped upon the altar which was made,** they began a sacrificial dance with a reeling movement. V. 27. **And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god,** that is, in their opinion; **either he is talking,** engaged in deep meditation, **or he is pursuing,** having stepped out for a few minutes, **or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked.** This was holy derision and irony, for it is altogether in order, in given circumstances, to ridicule the hollowness and insufficiency of unbelief and false religions. V. 28. **And they,** with whom the outcome of the affair was now a matter of the greatest seriousness, **cried aloud and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets,** with swords and sharp lances, for they now tried a weapon-dance, **till the blood gushed out upon them,** all with the idea of compelling their idol to answer their frantic appeals. V. 29. **And it came to pass, when midday was past and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice,** about three o'clock in the afternoon, **that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded,** all their efforts received not the slightest recognition or attention from the idol in whom they trusted.

V. 30. **And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me,** he wanted them to be witnesses of the events which were about to take place. **And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down,** this being one of the heights where sacrifices to Jehovah had formerly been made. V. 31. **And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name,** he wanted to declare, at this time, that it was really the twelve tribes which constituted the Lord's people, and that they should remain united in the worship of Jehovah; v. 32. **and with the stones,** on the foundation of the former altar, **he built an altar in the name of the Lord,** where Jehovah was to reveal Himself as the one true God. **And he made a trench about the altar,** a ditch to receive the water which he intended to be poured upon the sacrifice, **as great as would contain two measures of seed,** that is, he had the people dig out as much soil as would have been needed to hold two measures of seed, if this had been sown there. V. 33. **And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels,** large pails, **with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.** V. 34. **And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.** V. 35. **And the water ran round about the altar,** covering and soaking everything thoroughly; **and he filled the trench also with water,** as it ran down from the altar. Altogether, the measures adopted by Elijah would prevent any suspicion of fraud. V. 36. **And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah, the prophet, came near,** approaching closely to the altar, **and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel,** the God of the nation's ancestors, **let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word;** for he had not acted in his own cause or interest, but only in behalf and for the honor of the Lord, at whose command all this was performed. V. 37. **Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again,** that which was about to happen should result in their conversion to the true God. V. 38. **Then the fire of the Lord fell,** as when the Tabernacle was dedicated, Lev. 9, 24, **and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust,** that in the spaces between the stones, **and licked up the water that was in the trench.** It was a miraculous fire, one, moreover, which exceeded any ordinary fire in intensity. V. 39. **And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces,** in reverent awe and in terror; **and they said, The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God!** An overpowering impression had been made upon them, and the confession that Jehovah was the one and only true God came from full conviction. V. 40. **And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal,** lay hold on them quickly; **let not one of them escape. And they took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon,** which flows at the foot of Mount Carmel, **and slew them there.** It was the judgment of God upon the false prophets and their soul-destroying doctrines. While the kingdom of God is no longer built and maintained by external force, God still shows by an occasional extraordinary punishment upon blasphemers that He is the only true, the living God, and that there is none beside Him. V. 41. **And Elijah said unto Ahab,** who was also present at this great meeting, **Get thee up, eat and drink,** he could once more be of good cheer; **for there is a sound of abundance of rain.** The prophet heard the noise of the approaching storm before there was a cloud in the sky. V. 42. **So Ahab went up to eat and to drink,** to refresh himself after the anxiety of the last days. **And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel,** to a promontory which offered a view of the sea; **and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,** in an attitude of the most earnest, importunate prayer, v. 43. **and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea,** where the storm-clouds would be visible at once. **And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times,** again and again, for the rain must surely come. V. 44. **And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man's hand. And he,** knowing that this cloud would bring the expected rain, **said, Go up, say unto Ahab,** whose tent was probably pitched among the crags, **Prepare thy chariot and get thee down that the rain stop thee not.** V. 45. **And it came to pass in the mean while,** while Ahab got ready to return to his home, **that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel,** evidently his summer residence. V. 46. **And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah,** imparting to him supernatural strength; **and he girded up his loins,** to make traveling easier, **and ran before Ahab,** as a faithful servant ready to stand at his side in removing the curse of idolatry from the country, **to the entrance of Jezreel,** this run of some seventeen miles being in itself an unusual feat. Note: A nation's weal and woe, blessing and curse, depends upon its relation to the true God.

CHAPTER 19.

Elijah in the Wilderness.

Elijah Flees before Jezebel. — V. 1. **And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.** He was bound to give her a report of all that had transpired, and his heart undoubtedly had to sanction the execution which had taken place. V. 2. **Then Jezebel, lashed to fury by this turn of events, sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.** She did not dare to have him put to death outright, and would probably not have carried out her threat, on account of the attitude of the people, but she hoped to get rid of the prophet by this scheme. V. 3. **And when he saw that,** when he noted the conditions in the northern kingdom and the unchanging hatred of Jezebel, which seemed to make all further attempts useless, **he arose and went for his life,** commending his soul to his God and Lord, that he might be secure in His protection, **and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah,** on its extreme southern boundary, **and left his servant there,** since he intended to be entirely alone in the wilderness with his God. V. 4. **But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness,** the northern Arabian Desert, **and came and sat down under a juniper-tree,** a furze-bush or broom-plant, abundant in beds of streams; **and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.** He felt that he had lived long enough, that he had done his duty; he was tired of his prophetic office and longed for rest. V. 5. **And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree,** under the furze-bush which he had sought, **behold, then an Angel,** the special Messenger of God, **touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.** V. 6. **And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake,** one of the usual small bread-cakes, **baken on the coals,** on the heated stones, **and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again,** overcome by his great weariness. V. 7. **And the Angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, for he had not finished his meal, because the journey is too great for thee,** namely, the trip which the Lord had in mind for him. V. 8. **And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat,** food which had been given supernatural powers of sustaining strength, **forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.** Like Moses before him, he was miraculously preserved by God. Note: It happens time and again that faithful pastors become weary and distressed when they see that their earnest labors bring so little fruit. But God always has strength for them in His Word and in the power of His Spirit.

Elijah Receives the Lord's Commission. V. 9. **And he came thither, to Horeb, unto a cave and lodged there,** probably in the same cleft from which Moses saw the glory of the Lord, Ex. 33, 21—23. **And, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?** God wanted a frank expression of all his hopes and fears. V. 10. **And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts,** defending His honor with all energy; **for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant,** fallen away from the covenant-relation, **thrown down Thine altars,** thus signifying their utter rejection of Jehovah and His Word and worship, **and slain Thy prophets with the sword,** another proof of their utter contempt for Jehovah; **and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.** Such being the situation, he wondered what might yet be done, how a change in the conditions might be brought about, implying, at the same time, that Jehovah alone would be able to help and to save. V. 11. **And He,** the Lord, **said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord,** as Moses had done before him, Ex. 24, 12. **And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake;** v. 12. **and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still, small voice.** The first terrible phenomena were signs of the approaching judgment; they reminded Elijah of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. But Elijah was to learn that, while the thunders of the Law have their value in the kingdom of God, to prepare the hearts for the message of salvation, yet the still, small voice, the gentle teaching of the Gospel, the joyful announcement of the grace of God in the work of the Messiah, alone is able to convert the hearts to the Lord. A jealous zeal for Jehovah, unless tempered with the proper Gospel attitude, will not win hearts for Christ; but God's voice is in the Word of the Gospel and creates hearts anew. V. 13. **And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle,** for even the angels stand with covered faces before the throne of the Holy One, **and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him,** for the second time, **and with a hint of reproach, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?** He should have returned to

his post immediately. V. 14. **And he said,** repeating his lament, **I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.** V. 15. **And the Lord said unto him,** in bidding him take up the work of his calling once more, **Go, return on thy way to the Wilderness of Damascus,** in the land of Syria; **and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria;** v. 16. **and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.** There is absolutely no reason to suppose, as some commentators do, that this command was not carried out by Elijah, although we may assume that the anointing, in the first two cases, was done in secret. V. 17. **And it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay, and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.** In other words, the Lord would take care of the punishment of His enemies in due time. And He adds a little statement intended to reprove Elijah for his small faith. V. 18. **Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him;** for it was customary to kiss the statues of the idols. So Elijah was by no means the only true believer left, as the Lord, who knows those who are His, assured him. In the midst of a godless world He has His small crew, a small flock, indeed, but nevertheless loyal to Him. V. 19. **So he,** Elijah, **departed thence, and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he,** as the master, a man in comfortable circumstances, **with the twelfth. And Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.** V. 20. **And he,** understanding the significance of this act, **left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother,** in saying farewell to them, **and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him,** in granting this request, **Go back again; for what have I done to thee?** He wanted Elisha's acceptance of the prophetic calling to be one of his own free will. V. 21. **And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen,** the one with which he had been plowing, **and slew them,** for a farewell feast, **and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen,** the yoke and the wooden parts of the plow, **and gave unto the people,** his people, who had been busy with him in the field, **and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.** Thus the servants of the Lord must not consult with flesh and blood, but gladly follow the call of the Lord, no matter where this may take them.

CHAPTER 20.

War with the Syrians.

BENHADAD'S FIRST DEFEAT.—V. 1. **And Benhadad, the king of Syria,** under whom the kingdom had grown very strong, **gathered all his host together,** his entire army; **and there were thirty and two kings with him,** vassal kings, tributary chiefs, including lords of single cities and their districts, **and horses, and chariots; and he went up and besieged Samaria,** in a campaign of conquest, **and warred against it.** V. 2. **And he sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, into the city and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad,** v. 3. **Thy silver and thy gold is mine,** he coolly demanded the contents of the royal treasury; **thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest,** the most eminent young men of the city, **are mine,** he demanded that they be delivered to him as hostages. V. 4. **And the king of Israel,** appalled by the great show of power which the Syrian king displayed, **answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have,** he was ready to yield without the faintest show of resistance, glad to buy off his city by the payment of this tribute. V. 5. **And the messengers came again and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver and thy gold and thy wives and thy children,** v. 6. **yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house and the houses of thy servants,** openly plundering the houses of the wealthiest people in the city; **and it shall be that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes,** what Ahab valued especially highly, **they shall put it in their hand and take it away.** Benhadad's behavior was overbearing, insolent; it was equivalent to the demand that Ahab place himself and his city in his power. V. 7. **Then the king of Israel,** aroused to action by the unbounded insolence of Benhadad, **called all the elders of the land,** the highest officials of the country, who evidently had sought the shelter of the capital at the approach of Benhadad, **and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief,** his intention being to ruin Israel completely; **for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my**

silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not, so much he had willingly agreed to deliver. V. 8. And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him nor consent, he should pay no attention to Benhadad's demands, but be emphatic in his refusal. V. 9. Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do, willing to fulfil his first promise; but this thing I may not do, the second demand was an outrage. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. V. 10. And Benhadad sent unto him and said, in the rage of a tyrant who finds himself foiled, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me! His intention was so utterly to destroy the city that the dust of the ruins would not even suffice for the purpose mentioned by him. V. 11. And the king of Israel, whose courage grew at the same rate as the insolence of the enemy, answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off, a proverbial saying equivalent to: Do not boast of a victory before it is won. V. 12. And it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, engaged in a drinking-bout in the booths made of the branches of trees, which had been put up for them during the siege, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array, ready to storm the city in a sudden attack. And they set themselves in array against the city. V. 13. And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab, king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? It was a very great army which was encamped against the city. Behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. Here was both a promise of victory and a call to repentance. V. 14. And Ahab said, By whom? He wanted to know who was to bring about the deliverance. And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces, the servants of the officials of the various districts of Israel, the members of their body-guards. Then he said, Who shall order the battle, open the attack? And he answered, Thou; Ahab himself was to lead the charge. V. 15. Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two, a very small band to lead in the attack; and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, those able to bear arms, being seven thousand. V. 16. And they went out at noon, advancing boldly to the attack. But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. V. 17. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Benhadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria; they were not even recognized as a troop or as an attacking force. V. 18. And he said, in maudlin presumption, Whether they be come out for peace, that is, to confer about a treaty or to capitulate, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive, in either case, they were simply to be arrested. V. 19. So these young men of the princes of the provinces, a mere handful of soldiers, came out of the city, and the army which followed them. V. 20. And they, the members of the attacking band, slew every one his man, as they closed with the enemy in a hand-to-hand encounter. And the Syrians fled; and Israel, the entire army, pursued them. And Benhadad, the king of Syria, escaped on an horse with the horsemen, having quickly seized a chariot-horse, as the panic took hold of him. V. 21. And the king of Israel went out and smote the horses and chariots, all those who were trying to escape by means of them, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. Thus God punished the pride and the insolence of the tyrant, while, at the same time, He called Ahab to repentance. To this day the goodness of God plans to lead men to repentance if they would but take note of the signs.

Benhadad's Second Defeat, Capture, and Release. — V. 22. And the prophet, the same one who had prophesied the defeat of the Syrians, came to the king of Israel and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, namely, by enlarging and equipping his army, and mark and see what thou doest, he was to be on his guard; for at the return of the year, at the close of the winter rains, when campaigns were usually commenced, the king of Syria will come up against thee. V. 23. And the servants of the king of Syria, in an effort to find an explanation of their defeat, said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills, they believed that the God of Israel had power only in the mountainous region of Ephraim; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they, for they had the idea that the god of the mountains would have no power in the lowlands. But they had also a second suggestion. V. 24. And do this thing, Take the kings away, the tributary vassals, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms, upon whose loyalty one might rely with greater assurance; v. 25. and number thee an army, mustering a force as large as the first, like the army that thou hast lost, for the removal of the tributary kings meant the loss of their troops as well,

horse for horse and chariot for chariot; and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they; they felt sure that the victory must be theirs if these suggestions were carried out. And he hearkened unto their voice and did so. V. 26. And it came to pass at the return of the year, as the prophet had foretold, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians and went up to Aphek, in the Plain of Jezreel, the great battle-field of Palestine, to fight against Israel. V. 27. And the children of Israel were numbered, mustered for the campaign, and were all present, fully equipped and prepared, and went against them; and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, like two insignificant bands separated from the main herd; but the Syrians filled the country. V. 28. And there came a man of God, the same prophet once more, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, this being an insult to His majesty, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, again the reminder of the singular position of Jehovah. V. 29. And they pitched one over against the other seven days, each army waiting for an opening. And so it was that in the seventh day the battle was joined, the troops clashing upon each other; and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day, a slaughter made possible only by the help of God. V. 30. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there, by the miraculous interposition of God, a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber, literally, "from room to room," seeking a place where he might safely hide. V. 31. And his servants said unto him, Behold, now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings, unlike the murderous tyrants of the heathen; let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, as a sign of deep sorrow, and ropes upon our heads, as a token of complete subjection, and go out to the king of Israel, placing themselves absolutely into his power; peradventure he will save thy life. V. 32. So they, trying out this one last scheme to save their lives, girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. It was an unconditional surrender and a prayer for mercy. And he said, Is he yet alive? He is my brother. The king's vanity had so been flattered by the submission of Benhadad that he made this declaration. V. 33. Now, the men did diligently observe whether anything would come from him, whether he would give a favorable answer, and did hastily catch it; and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. By repeating Ahab's statement, they held him to his word. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. So far from treating him as a captive, who should have been put to death, he gave him all the honor of a king of equal rank, just as if Benhadad were not guilty of an unprovoked attack on Israel. V. 34. And Benhadad said unto him, taking advantage of Ahab's gracious mood, The cities which my father took from thy father, in a war of which we have no record, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria, sections of the city where he might open bazaars and carry on business unhindered, unrestricted free trade thus being offered. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him and sent him away. His manner of acting, in permitting a murderous, cruel tyrant to go scot-free, was due to weakness and vanity, and was not at all in accord with God's will. V. 35. And a certain man of the sons of the prophets, the association which is mentioned so often during this period of Israel's history, said unto his neighbor in the word of the Lord, by Jehovah's order, Smite me, I pray thee, the purpose being to inflict a wound upon him. And the man refused to smite him. V. 36. Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, for so the matter had undoubtedly been explained to him, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him and slew him, as a punishment for his disobedience. V. 37. Then he found another man and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him. V. 38. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, for he wanted his message to reach him in public and before he returned home, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face, the heavy head-bandages concealed his features. V. 39. And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king; and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver, the prisoner thus being represented as a person of importance. V. 40. And as thy servant was busy here and there, engaged with minor matters, which caused him to forget his

trust, he was gone. The end of the parable, namely, as to whether he could be held responsible for the escape of the prisoner entrusted to him, is purposely omitted. **And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it,** he would have to pay the penalty. V. 41. **And he, the prophet, hasted and took the ashes, the bandage, away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets,** he recognized his face. V. 42. **And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life and thy people for his people;** Ahab would be held responsible, he would have to pay the penalty. By letting the archenemy escape, he had practically denied the might, the goodness, and the justice of Jehovah, and both he and Israel would pay. V. 43. **And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, in a peevish and stubborn mood, and came to Samaria.** Where God's Word has spoken, all other considerations, including even that of human sympathy and expediency, must be set aside. He who blesses a sinner and condones a transgression plainly condemned by God's holy will, draws down God's curse upon his own soul.

CHAPTER 21.

Ahab's Crime against Naboth.

The Murder of Naboth. — V. 1. **And it came to pass after these things,** when the Lord had given Ahab such rich evidences of His bounteous blessing in defeating the dreaded enemy twice, **that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria,** in its immediate neighborhood, so that it was always before the king's eyes. V. 2. **And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard that I may have it for a garden of herbs,** a vegetable garden, **because it is near unto my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.** This sounded innocent enough, but it conflicted with one of the fundamental laws of the Lord's people. V. 3. **And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.** The Lord had plainly commanded that the children of Israel were not to dispose of the property allotted to them, and even such lands as were sold on account of poverty reverted to the original owners in the year of jubilee, Num. 36, 1—13; Lev. 25, 10—28; Ex. 34, 9. The only consideration in this case was the whim of the king; he had set his heart upon that garden and would be satisfied with nothing else. V. 4. **And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased,** in a peevish and angry mood, **because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face,** staring fixedly at the wall, **and would eat no bread.** It was a childish and despicable manner of showing his displeasure over the refusal of Naboth, indicating, at the same time, that Ahab, with all his wickedness, lacked the energy to carry out his designs. V. 5. **But Jezebel, his wife, came to him and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest no bread?** V. 6. **And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money, or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it; and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.** V. 7. **And Jezebel, his wife, said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?** It is a question charged with the deepest irony: Thou, dost thou now exercise authority over Israel? He was a fine king to be lying in bed over such a matter; he was a fine ruler even to think of asking any of his subjects for something he desired. **Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.** Since he did not dare to act the man and the king, in her opinion, she would see to it that he obtained his heart's desire. V. 8. **So she,** taking the matter in her own hands and assuming an authority which was not hers, **wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal,** which she probably coolly took from him for her purpose, **and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city,** the local magistrates, Deut. 16, 18, **dwelling with Naboth,** and therefore presumably acquainted with his whole life. V. 9. **And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast,** such as were customary in cases of a national calamity, **and set Naboth on high among the people,** indicating before the entire city that he was under accusation and had brought a heavy guilt upon the whole community; v. 10. **and set two men, sons of Belial,** worthless rascals, **before him,** the show of justice being maintained throughout, **to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king,** for the king represented God and ruled in His name. **And then carry him out and stone him that he may die,** for that was the punishment set upon blasphemy, Deut. 13, 11; 17, 5; Lev. 24, 14. V. 11. **And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles**

who were the inhabitants in his city, probably out of slavish fear of the tyranny of Jezebel, **did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.** V. 12. **They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.** V. 13. **And there came in two men, children of Belial,** conscienceless scoundrels, **and sat before him,** as his accusers; **and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.** V. 14. **Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned and is dead.** All of which shows that the corruption of the royal court was found in all states of society at that time. The magistrates of Jezreel were just as much guilty of murder as Jezebel, who was a tyrant seeking the blood of the just. Naboth must be considered a martyr in a noble cause, who gave up his life for the sake of God's Word.

The Prophecy of Ahab's Doom. — V. 15. **And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned and was dead,** his sons having been forced to share his fate, 2 Kings 9, 26, **that Jezebel said to Ahab,** who had persisted in his stubborn, childish behavior, **Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.** V. 16. **And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.** Although he had not personally conducted the case against Naboth, and probably did not know what means Jezebel actually employed to get possession of his vineyard, yet he was fully as guilty as she, for he had known that she had contrived to get Naboth out of the way, by fair means or foul. V. 17. **And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite,** who now appears on the scene once more, **saying,** v. 18. **Arise, go down,** namely, from the mountain district in which he was then staying, **to meet Ahab, king of Israel, which is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.** V. 19. **And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and also taken possession?** The question was not put to cause a confession of guilt, but to accuse the king outright of murder and of robbery. He had probably tried to quiet his conscience with the excuse that the property of a blasphemer who had suffered the penalty of death was taken over by the crown. **And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.** His was to be a similar disgraceful death, that of a criminal. V. 20. **And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?** The implication was that Elijah was always endeavoring to oppose the king and to thwart his purposes. **And he,** with all the frank fearlessness of God's messenger, **answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.** Ahab had so abandoned himself to wickedness that he had become its slave. V. 21. **Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity,** the sentence of doom upon the families of apostate kings, **and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,** all the male descendants of the king; even the minors were included in the curse. Cp. chap. 14, 10. V. 22. **And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah,** whose families were eradicated by divine decree, chap. 15, 29; 16, 3. 11, **for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked Me to anger and made Israel to sin.** V. 23. **And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.** Cp. 2 Kings 9, 10. 36. V. 24. **Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat;** they would, by the Lord's curse, be denied even an honorable burial. V. 25. **But there was none like unto Ahab,** a note inserted by the historian, **which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel, his wife, stirred up,** their union being an unusually striking example of warning against the evil of mixed marriages. V. 26. **And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel,** the reference being to all the Canaanitish nations. V. 27. **And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly,** all signs of deep mourning and penitence. For a while at least his sorrow was sincere. V. 28. **And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,** v. 29. **Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? Because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.** Thus the punishment was deferred, and the misdeeds of the father were borne by the children, who followed him in his evil ways. It is a terrible thing to despise and reject the goodness and the severity of God, for the end is bound to be death, everlasting destruction.

CHAPTER 22.

War with the Syrians. — Reign of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah.

The Campaign against the Syrians. — V. 1. **And they continued three years,** literally, "they rested," they undertook no further campaigns, **without war between Syria and Israel;** so long the false friendship lasted. V. 2. **And it came to pass in the third year that Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, came down to the king of Israel;** his son having married a daughter of Ahab, he made a formal visit and was entertained most lavishly, 2 Chron. 18, 1 ff. V. 3. **And the king of Israel said unto his servants,** at some time during Jehoshaphat's visit, **Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead,** an important fortified city in the country east of Jordan, **is ours,** both by right of original possession and by covenant with Benhadad, chap. 20, 34, **and we be still,** remain inactive in spite of this state of affairs, **and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?** V. 4. **And he said unto Jehoshaphat,** whom he intended to gain for his side, **Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat,** who should have kept out of this entangling alliance, **said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses,** he pledged himself and all his resources, his entire military power, to the support of Ahab's project. V. 5. **And Jehoshaphat,** remembering at least some caution in time, **said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day;** he wanted to be sure that the undertaking was in agreement with the will of Jehovah. V. 6. **Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together,** not true prophets of Jehovah, but men who presumed upon the office for the sake of filthy gain, **about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they,** who seem to have been at the same time priests of the calf-worship introduced by Jeroboam and therefore were anxious to please the king, whose purpose was so evident, **said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.** V. 7. **And Jehoshaphat,** not at all satisfied with this farce, **said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides,** a true and genuine prophet of Jehovah, **that we might enquire of him?** V. 8. **And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah,** he was immediately available, as some commentators think because he had delivered an unfavorable prophecy to Ahab and had thereupon been placed in prison, **by whom we may enquire of the Lord; but I hate him,** just as Ahab hated everything else connected with the true worship of Jehovah; **for he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil.** Ahab evidently held the heathen idea that the prophet had some influence over the God whom he served and could be held responsible with his person for an unfavorable oracle. **And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so;** he rebuked Ahab for his alleged hatred and his consequent unwillingness to listen to Micaiah. V. 9. **Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, Hasten hither Micaiah, the son of Imlah;** he conceded this point for the sake of his scheme. V. 10. **And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, sat each on his throne, having put on their robes,** clothed in all their royal finery, as was proper for such a solemn assembly, **in a void place,** in an open space which had been made level like a threshing-floor, **in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets,** those whom Ahab had summoned at first, **prophesied before them.** V. 11. **And Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, made him horns of iron,** probably in the form of large spikes which he held against his forehead, this being a symbolical action intended to remind his audience of Deut. 33, 17; **and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians,** like a strong wild ox, **until thou have consumed them.** V. 12. **And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper,** sure of the victory even in advance; **for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand.** V. 13. **And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him,** in an effort to influence him and to shape his prophecy, **saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth,** there was perfect agreement among them; **let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.** V. 14. **And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak;** as a faithful prophet of Jehovah he would not deviate so much as one inch from the path of his duty. V. 15. **So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.** Either the prophet's tone of voice or his face must have shown that he was speaking in holy irony, rebuking the king for his hypocritical question, as though he had said: Why the formality? Your mind is made up. Go ahead; march out into the battle-field; for all I may say will not change your mind. V. 16. **And the king,** in order to convince Jehoshaphat of a sincerity which he by no means felt, **said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?** It sounded like zeal for

the truth, but was in reality another specimen of hypocrisy. V. 17. **And he**, ready now to describe the vision which Jehovah gave him, **said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd; and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace.** The meaning was clear. Ahab would fall in battle, his soldiers would be scattered in the hills of Gilead, they would eventually return to their homes without being pursued. V. 18. **And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat**, in trying to blame this unfavorable prophecy on the personal enmity of Micaiah, **Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?** V. 19. **And he**, Micaiah, said, **Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord**, an account of a second vision, which explained the attitude of the four hundred prophets: **I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left**, God appearing here as the great, almighty Ruler of the world. V. 20. **And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab**, deceiving or seducing him, **that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?** It is plain that the fall of Ahab was determined in the counsels of God. **And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.** V. 21. **And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord**, evidently the spirit of prophecy represented as a person, **and said, I will persuade him.** V. 22. **And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets**, causing them to prophesy falsehoods. **And he said, Thou shalt persuade him and prevail also; go forth and do so.** Since Ahab had sold himself into the service of sin and hardened his heart against all permanent good influences, therefore the Lord now deliberately gave him up to the destruction which he sought. V. 23. **Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.** This explained the remarkable agreement among the false prophets of Ahab. V. 24. **But Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah**, who had heard this explanation, **went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?** He challenged Micaiah for evidence, being certain that he did not invent the saying which he had so confidently spoken before the king, but overlooking, at the same time, that the application of brute force was no way of establishing his claim. V. 25. **And Micaiah**, without resenting the blow inflicted by Zedekiah, **said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself**, running from one room to another in the excess of his terror over the fulfilment of Micaiah's prophecy. V. 26. **And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah and carry him back unto Amon, the governor of the city**, in whose care he had therefore been before, **and to Joash, the king's son**, a prince of the blood, who, with the commandant of the city, had charge of the prisoners, v. 27. **and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction**, with rough prison fare, **until I come in peace**, for he boldly thought that he would be successful in his campaign. V. 28. **And Micaiah**, fully conscious of his divine office, **said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you!** He called upon those present to be witnesses of his word, knowing that his prophecy would surely be fulfilled. Though the godless children of the world are full of hatred against the true servants of the Lord, the latter never hesitate in announcing God's wrath and displeasure upon the children of unbelief, the purpose being to induce them to leave the path of unrighteousness.

THE DEATH OF AHAB. — V. 29. **So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead**, the latter apparently being unwilling to take back his promise, since Ahab had declared Micaiah to be his personal opponent. V. 30. **And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat**, in his anxiety to safeguard his own life, **I will disguise myself and enter into the battle**, contrary to the custom according to which the king preceded his troops clothed in royal garments; **but put thou on thy robes**, for in his case the enemies would have no special reason to single him out and put him to death. **And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into the battle.** V. 31. **But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains**, chap. 20, 24, **that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel**; they were to concentrate their efforts on the killing of Ahab, for the end of Ahab would mean the end of the war and victory for the Syrian forces. V. 32. **And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat**, who was immediately distinguishable by his royal costume, **that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him**, they turned their chariots in his direction; **and Jehoshaphat cried out**, either calling his name or shouting to his own soldiers to come to his aid. V. 33. **And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him**, for their orders were to take or kill Ahab. V. 34. **And a certain man drew a bow at a venture**, without being conscious of the fact

that the man he aimed at, who wore the clothing of an ordinary soldier, was the king of Israel, **and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness,** in the narrow opening between the skirt and the breastplate of his armor; **wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand,** guiding the horses away from the battle-line, **and carry me out of the host, for I am wounded,** no longer able to take part in the conflict, forced to retire from the fight. V. 35. **And the battle increased that day,** it was waged with great bitterness on both sides. **And the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians,** unable to reach a place of shelter on account of the bitterness of the encounter, **and died at even; and the blood ran out of the wound,** which could not be dressed, **into the midst of the chariot,** collecting in pools in the rounded part of the chariot-floor. V. 36. **And there went a proclamation throughout the host,** evidently started by the discouraged soldiers themselves, **about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city and every man to his own country!** They abandoned the field and scattered to their homes. V. 37. **So the king died, and was brought to Samaria,** coming not as a victor, but as a corpse; **and they buried the king in Samaria.** V. 38. **And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria,** for this city, like others, had its reservoir; **and the dogs licked up his blood,** as it flowed out of the chariot, mingled with water. **And they washed his armor,** literally, "the harlots were bathing," they used this polluted water in their evening washing, thus bringing more shame upon the memory of Ahab, **according unto the word of the Lord which He spake,** chap. 21, 19. V. 39. **Now the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made,** the palace richly decorated with ivory, either in Jezreel or in Samaria, **and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 40. **So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah, his son, reigned in his stead.** Such was the terrible and disgraceful end of the proud king. And in like manner, eternal shame and disgrace is the end of all those who rebel against the Lord of heaven.

Jehoshaphat in Judah, Ahaziah in Israel. — V. 41. **And Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab, king of Israel.** Cp. 2 Chron. 17—21. V. 42. **Jehoshaphat,** of whose reign only a very brief summary is here given, **was thirty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name,** mentioned, as usual, on account of the obvious great influence of the mother in Oriental harems, **was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.** V. 43. **And he walked in all the ways of Asa, his father,** keeping the covenant of Jehovah; **he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord; nevertheless, the high places,** those devoted to Jehovah worship, against the real purpose of the Lord, **were not taken away; for the people offered and burned incense yet in the high places,** they did not confine their worship to the Temple at Jerusalem, as the Lord had ordered. V. 44. **And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel,** a state of war having existed between the two kingdoms for about seventy years. V. 45. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed,** especially in building fortresses and in increasing the military forces of the country, **and how he warred, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 46. **And the remnant of the sodomites,** the male prostitutes, **which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land,** his rule being notable also for that reason. V. 47. **There was then no king in Edom,** for the Edomites, who had been conquered by David, had either not succeeded in regaining their independence, or they had not been able to keep it; **a deputy was king,** acting as governor under the overlordship of the king of Judah. V. 48. **Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish,** ocean-going vessels such as were used for the trade with Spain, **to go to Ophir for gold; but they went not, for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber,** the harbor at the head of the Elanitic Gulf, a storm destroying them at God's command, 2 Chron. 20, 37. V. 49. **Then said Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships.** **But Jehoshaphat would not,** he refused to make a second attempt, after the Lord had so plainly shown his disapproval of the undertaking. V. 50. **And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, his father; and Jehoram, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 51. **Ahaziah, the son of Ahab,** whose accession to the throne was noted v. 40, **began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.** V. 52. **And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother,** in extreme idolatry, **and in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,** by introducing idolatry when he erected the golden calves; v. 53. **for he served Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.** The terrible end of his father had not taught this idolater the lesson which he should have learned. It is due to men's own deliberate blindness that they meet with misfortune and are condemned.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.[1]

CHAPTER 1.

The Illness of Ahaziah and His Death.

Elijah Prophesies Ahaziah's Death. — V. 1. **Then Moab rebelled against Israel,** after having been tributary since the time of David, 2 Sam. 8, 2, **after the death of Ahab.** The success of the Syrians, not only in regaining their independence, but in administering a severe defeat to the forces of Israel, had probably encouraged the Moabites to take this step. V. 2. **And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria,** through a latticed window-opening such as were common in the Orient, **and was sick,** being severely injured by his fall. **And he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baal-zebub** (Fly-god), **the god of Ekron,** the northernmost of the five Philistine city-states, **whether I shall recover of this disease.** So Ahaziah, probably at the advice of his wicked mother Jezebel, turned to the heathen idol for information and help, just as people in our days reject the truth of Scripture, but eagerly believe every form of superstition. V. 3. **But the Angel of the Lord,** the son of God as He revealed Himself in the Old Testament, **said to Elijah the Tishbite,** who was still active in his prophetic office, **Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?** It was a sharp question of earnest reproof for this new evidence of wickedness in the king. V. 4. **Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord,** as a punishment upon the king for this new exhibition of idolatry, **Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed,** namely, to carry out the command of the Lord. V. 5. **And when the messengers turned back unto him,** the king of Israel, **he,** knowing that they could not have made the trip to Ekron in this short time, **said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?** V. 6. **And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us,** a man unknown to the messengers, **and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?** The blame which was placed upon them all by the prophet they now lay upon the king alone. **Therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.** V. 7. **And he said unto them, What manner of man** was he which came up to meet you, literally, "What was the manner," the peculiarity, "of the man," what special mark of distinction did you note in his dress or bearing, **and told you these words?** V. 8. **And they answered him, He was an hairy man,** wearing a rough garment of camel's hair, **and girt with a girdle of leather,** instead of the customary one of linen or cotton, **about his loins.** His entire dress and appearance thus proclaimed the preacher of repentance, reproving the luxury of the people of his days. **And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite,** he recognized him at once from the description given. The position of preachers of repentance is not a pleasant occupation, but they are needed in every age of the world's existence, especially also in these last days of sore distress.

The Punishment of Ahaziah's Servants and His Death. — V. 9. **Then the king sent unto him,** Elijah, **a captain of fifty with his fifty,** some act of violence being intended. **And he,** the captain, **went up to him; and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill,** where he lived. **And he spake unto him,** in a tone and form of harsh command, **Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.** It was not a respectful address, but a haughty, contemptuous, and scoffing insult. V. 10. **And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty.** This has been transcribed as follows: "If I be a man of God, as thou sayest, but dost not think, then I am not bound to obey the king, but God, nor am I subject to his power, but to God's, who will make thee know that He judges in the earth." 2) **And there came down fire from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.** V. 11. **Again, also, he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty,** he persisted in his stubborn wilfulness. **And he answered and said unto him,** sharing the king's contempt for the prophet, as the first captain had, **O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.** His command was even more peremptory than that of the first messenger. V. 12. **And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.** In either case the men were guilty of a deliberate mockery of the prophetical office in the person of Elijah, and therefore of the Lord Himself, hence the quick and terrible punishment, similar to those which are occasionally meted out by the Lord in our day,

1) For introductory remarks see the Introduction to the First Book of Kings.

2) Cp. Lange-Schaff, 2 Kings, p. 5.

and which the infidels vainly try to explain away. V. 13. **And he**, the king, still determined to carry out his will, **sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up**, but in an entirely different spirit, so far as his own person was concerned, **and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him**, with all humility, **O man of God, I pray thee, let my life and the life of these fifty, thy servants, be precious in thy sight**, namely, by not calling down God's punishment upon them. V. 14. **Behold, there came fire down from heaven and burned up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties; therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.** He acknowledged the righteous punishment of God and begged to be spared. V. 15. **And the Angel of the Lord**, the same who had directed him to deliver the message to the king's ambassadors, v. 3, **said unto Elijah, Go down with him; be not afraid of him**, that is, of the king. **And he arose and went down with him unto the king.** V. 16. **And he**, without giving Ahaziah an opportunity to heap maledictions upon him, **said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of His Word**, this being the standard to which all appeals should be made at all times? **Therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.** V. 17. **So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram**, his brother, **reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah**, who was probably made coregent by his father at the time when the latter joined in the campaign against the Syrians with Ahab, **because he had no son.** V. 18. **Now, the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** The story of Elijah's punishment of the blasphemous captains and their bands is referred to in the New Testament, Luke 9, 54 ff. As God had a great deal of patience with the godless kings of Israel, so He, in the New Testament, much prefers using His mercy; for it is His purpose to seek and to save lost sinners. Nevertheless, when men persist in rejecting and blaspheming Christ and His salvation, they must expect the well-earned damnation to come upon them.

CHAPTER 2.

Elijah's Ascension and Elisha's First Miracles.

Elijah Taken up to Heaven. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind**, at the time which the Lord had fixed for this important event, of which He had informed His faithful servant, **that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal**, a town near Shiloh, on the road leading into the Jordan Valley. V. 2. **And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel.** His humility prompted him to make this request, for he did not know whether his translation to heaven was to be attended by any witness. **And Elisha said unto him**, with a solemn oath, **As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.** He was bound to his teacher, to his spiritual father, with the bonds of the most faithful affection. **So they went down to Bethel**, the well-known city nearer to Jerusalem, where there was also a school of prophets. V. 3. **And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?** They also had received the information that the Lord would take their beloved teacher from them. **And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.** So all the persons concerned, yielding to the will of God, were ready for the sacrifice, but because they loved one another, they did not discuss the departure, the subject being too painful for them to think about. V. 4. **And Elijah said unto him**, as before, **Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho**, near the Jordan, where there was another school of prophet disciples. **And he said**, as before, **As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.** V. 5. **And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho**, the disciples or students of the prophets' school located there, **came to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered**, as in Bethel, **Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.** Thus Elijah had now visited the chief prophets' schools. V. 6. **And Elijah said unto him**, his humility once more prompting him to make the suggestion, **Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan**, near this river his departure was to take place. **And he said**, still determined to stay with his master to the end, **As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.** It was probably the Spirit of God Himself who urged him to accompany his aged teacher. **And they two went on.** V. 7. **And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off**, they stood at an elevated point, following the two prophets with

their eyes as long as possible; **and they two stood by Jordan.** V. 8. **And Elijah took his mantle,** one of the signs of his prophetical office, **and wrapped it together, and smote the waters; and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground,** as the children of Israel had done at the time of their entrance into Canaan, Josh. 3, 16. V. 9. **And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee,** some last favor. **And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me,** the reference being to the right of the first-born, who received twice as much of his father's goods as the rest of the children, Deut. 21, 17. Elisha's request, as the spiritual son of Elijah, was that he might get a greater share of his spirit than any other prophet of his time. V. 10. **And he,** Elijah, **said, Thou hast asked a hard thing,** one which was, in fact, not in Elijah's hands to bestow, but could be granted by God alone; **nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee,** if Elisha would be an eye-witness of his wonderful departure, **it shall be so unto thee,** that would be a token to him that the Lord had granted his request; **but if not, it shall not be so.** V. 11. **And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked,** while they were engaged in earnest conversation, **that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder,** in a manner hidden from mere human understanding; **and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.** While the storm was playing about the two men, while Elisha plainly saw the chariot and the horses of fire, Elijah was taken from his side and miraculously carried upward, to be translated to the realms of bliss above. V. 12. **And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father,** for Elijah had been his spiritual father, **the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!** For the presence of Elijah in Israel had proved a powerful protection against the enemies. **And he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces,** as an expression of his great grief and pain at the loss of his fatherly teacher and friend. V. 13. **He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him,** purposely dropped at the moment of his departure, **and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan.** V. 14. **And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?** This was not a question of doubt, but meant to say: "Thou, God of Elijah, if Thou art also mine, and if I am Thy servant according to Thy will and command as he was, then let this become evident by granting that that may take place at my word which Thou grantedst should come to pass at his." (Menken.) **And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over.** Thus Elisha received his credentials as the successor of Elijah and could go forth to carry on his prophetic work.

ELISHA'S MIRACULOUS POWERS. —V. 15. **And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho,** those who had stood at a distance to witness the older men crossing the Jordan on dry ground, **saw him,** returning in the same manner as both he and Elijah had gone over, **they said,** drawing their conclusion from this miracle, **The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him,** with the same veneration which they had formerly shown to Elijah. V. 16. **And they said unto him, Behold, now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master, lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.** They had known that Elijah was to be removed from Elisha's head, v. 5. but they had no definite idea of the meaning attached to this expression, believing, apparently, that the soul of Elijah alone had been taken, and that they would be able to find his body somewhere in the neighborhood. **And he said, Ye shall not send.** He knew that their plan was altogether foolish, since Elijah had been translated to heaven according to body and soul. V. 17. **And when they had urged him till he was ashamed,** when their stubborn persistence showed him that there was no hope of dissuading them from their purpose, **he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not,** their strenuous search proved fruitless. V. 18. **And when they came again to him,** (**for he tarried at Jericho,**) **he said unto them,** in a mild reproof for not heeding his advice, **Did I not say unto you, Go not?** V. 19. **And the men of the city,** probably the magistrates or the influential citizens, **said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant,** on a beautiful oasis, noted for its splendid palms, **as my lord seeth; but the water is naught,** it had a bad effect, **and the ground barren,** miscarriages were the rule in the country round about, apparently on account of the water. V. 20. **And he said, Bring me a new cruse,** a receptacle, **and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.** V. 21. **And he went forth unto the spring of the waters,** where the brook welled up from the ground, **and cast the salt in there,** as a prophetical, symbolical action to indicate what the Lord was about to do, **and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren**

land, that is, barrenness, of which they had complained. This miracle was intended to convey to the minds of the people the fact of the blessings of God in the prophetic activities of Elisha. V. 22. **So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.** The spring and the brook served as permanent reminders of Jehovah's goodness and power for good. V. 23. **And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city and mocked him,** a band of blaspheming youngsters up to the age of young men, children of the idolaters of Bethel, **and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head! Go up, thou bald head!** They railed on him and insulted him as an impure and expelled person. V. 24. **And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord;** for it was as Jehovah's prophet that the mockery had been heaped upon him. **And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them,** without, however, making any move toward eating them. It was God's punishment upon these revilers of His servant, for their number shows that they had planned this demonstration with deliberate, wicked intent. V. 25. **And he went from thence to Mount Carmel,** he chose solitude and concealment for a while, after the manner of the prophets, **and from thence he returned to Samaria,** where he afterwards had a house, chap. 6, 32. Note: It is not wrong or an injustice, but is done out of obedience to God, if His servants pronounce His curse and damnation upon persistent blasphemers.

CHAPTER 3.

Jehoram of Israel and His Joint Campaign with Judah against Moab.

THE CAMPAIGN UNDERTAKEN. — V. 1. **Now Jehoram, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah,** who had evidently made his son Jehoram coregent the year before, chap. 1, 17, **and reigned twelve years.** V. 2. **And he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like his father and like his mother,** Jezebel, the idolater and tyrant; **for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made,** 1 Kings 16, 31. 32. His object was evidently to make the worship of the golden calves the only national religion. V. 3. **Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.** No matter what the original intention of the calf-statues had been, their worship had degenerated to the lowest form of idolatry. V. 4. **And Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheepmaster,** his well-watered country being particularly fitted for purposes of pasturage and his own wealth consisting largely of flocks, **and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs,** these probably being delivered alive for food, **and an hundred thousand rams with the wool,** the fleeces alone being included in the tribute in this case. The payment was a very considerable one, even for a wealthy country. V. 5. **But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel,** as noted above, chap. 1, 1. V. 6. **And King Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time and numbered all Israel,** he mustered all his forces for the purpose of overthrowing the rebellion of Moab. V. 7. **And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me,** a fact which endangered the welfare of Judah as well; **wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said,** agreeing to the alliance, **I will go up; I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses,** 1 Kings 22, 4, thus pledging himself and all his resources for the assistance of Israel. V. 8. **And he,** Jehoram, **said, Which way shall we go up?** They could either cross the Jordan and move against the country from the north, or march down on the western side of the Dead Sea and attack from the east and south. **And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.** On this side the Moabites had no strong fortifications, the attacking army would not be exposed to a possible assault by the Syrians, and the two kings might count on the help of the Edomites. As our Lord also advises, it is always a safe matter to count the cost before attempting any serious matter.

THE MIRACLE IN THE WILDERNESS. — V. 9. **So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom,** the governor under the overlordship of Judah being given the title of king by courtesy, 1 Kings 22, 48; **and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey,** marching down near the western shore of the Dead Sea. **And there was no water for the host and for the cattle that followed them,** used as provisions for the army. They had ventured too far from their water supply. V. 10. **And the king of Israel,** immediately abandoning himself to despair, **said, Alas, that the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab!** Being without faith in Jehovah, he saw nothing but death and destruction before his eyes. V. 11. **But Jehoshaphat,** having confidence in the Lord, **said, Is there not here a prophet of**

the Lord that we may enquire of the Lord by him? Cp. 1 Kings 22, 7. He wanted the advice of a true prophet, of one in the service of Jehovah. **And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah,** namely, in the capacity of servant and disciple. V. 12. **And Jehoshaphat,** who had heard of this new prophet, **said, The word of the Lord is with him,** he is a genuine prophet. **So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him,** from the elevation on which their tents were placed to the valley where Elisha remained with the host. V. 13. **And Elisha said unto the king of Israel,** taking this opportunity to reprove him and to work a wholesome sorrow for his sins in his heart, **What have I to do with thee?** What business could they have together, since Jehoram was addicted to idolatry? **Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother;** for he still permitted the priests of Baal to continue in his land. **And the king of Israel,** with at least some show of humility, **said unto him, Nay; for the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab.** So his appeal for help was based upon the fact that the lives and armies of three kings were at stake. V. 14. **And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts,** Jehovah Sabaoth, the mighty Ruler of the heavenly armies, **liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee,** he would have ignored both him and his request. V. 15. **But now bring me a minstrel,** a harp-player, his intention being by means of the soothing influence of music to withdraw his mind from the outer world and prepare for any revelation which the Lord might give him. **And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him,** he became a mouthpiece of Jehovah. V. 16. **And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches,** with cisterns for holding an abundance of water. V. 17. **For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain,** there would be no rainstorm in or near their camp; **yet that valley shall be filled with water that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle and your beasts,** the former being the animals intended for food, the latter those bearing burdens. V. 18. **And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord,** it was a small matter to Jehovah to supply the army with drinking-water; **He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand,** granting them a glorious victory over the enemy. V. 19. **And ye shall smite every fenced city,** those with strong fortifications, **and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree,** even the fruit-trees not being excepted in this case, Deut. 20, 19. 20, **and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones,** by so covering it with stones that it would no longer be fit for cultivation. V. 20. **And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat-offering was offered,** at the time of the morning sacrifice, shortly after sunrise, **that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.** The Lord had sent a heavy rain or a cloudburst in the hills of Edom during the night, and the water now came rushing down the canyons into the valley where the combined armies were encamped. It was a miracle of God's mercy, one of whose objects was to turn the hearts of all the men to Him.

THE DEFEAT OF MOAB. — V. 21. **And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them,** this had taken place in the course of the seven days while the attacking army was approaching, **they gathered all that were able to put on armor,** summoning all those that were able to gird themselves, that is, to bear arms, **and upward,** not only the very young, but also all the older men, **and stood in the border,** drawn up in battle-line along the boundary of their country. V. 22. **And they rose up early in the morning,** on the day when the Lord sent down the water from the mountains of Edom, **and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood,** from the reflection of the sun's red light; v. 23. **and they said, This is blood,** a conclusion by no means far-fetched, for they knew that there was no water in the desert; **the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another,** their well-known jealousy having reached such a height of disagreement that a bloody carnage had resulted. **Now, therefore, Moab, to the spoil!** They broke ranks and rushed forward as a disorganized mob. V. 24. **And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites,** who were utterly taken by surprise when the enemy met them with arms ready for the attack, **so that they fled before them. But they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country;** for the Israelites and their allies pursued the fleeing Moabites across the boundary. V. 25. **And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone and filled it,** rendering it unfit for bearing grain; **and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees; only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof,** the capital city, the most important fortification of the country, they besieged last; **howbeit, the slingers went about it and smote it,** picking off the men of the garrison as they showed themselves upon the walls. V. 26. **And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore**

for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, expert swordsmen, **to break through even unto the king of Edom,** believing that this part of the attacking army was the weakest; **but they could not.** V. 27. **Then he,** the king of Moab, **took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead,** the heir apparent to the throne, **and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall,** sacrificing him to the Moabite war-god Chemosh in full sight of the besieging army. **And there was great indignation against Israel,** their army was filled with disgust and indignation at this deed; **and they departed from him,** not wishing to remain any longer in that country, horrified at seeing this human sacrifice, **and returned to their own land.** Thus all believers should abhor the abominations of the idolatrous world and flee from their temptations.

CHAPTER 4.

Various Miracles of Elisha.

The Widow's Oil Multiplied. — V. 1. **Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets,** the prophet disciples as found in several communities in Canaan, **unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant, my husband, is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord;** he had been a God-fearing prophet in truth, and not in name only; **and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen,** for this the law permitted to the next year of jubilee, Lev. 25, 39. V. 2. **And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? He asked her first to suggest some way of helping her. Tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil,** literally, "anointing oil," such as was used after the bath. V. 3. **Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.** She was not to be bashful about asking her neighbors. V. 4. **And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons,** to keep out every interruption, noise, and distraction, **and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.** V. 5. **So she went from him, and,** having borrowed vessels as she had been told, **shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out,** in a steady stream. V. 6. **And it came to pass, when the vessels were full,** namely, all those she had on hand, **that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed,** it ceased flowing when the available vessels were all filled. V. 7. **Then she came and told the man of God,** leaving it to his wisdom to decide how she should dispose of the oil. **And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt,** satisfy the creditor and thus get rid of him, **and live thou and thy children of the rest,** namely, of the money which remained after paying her creditor. God is ever the Father of the widows and the orphans and has, in many a case, provided all that certain ones needed to support their body and life, even in an evidently miraculous manner.

Elisha and the Shunammite. — V. 8. **And it fell on a day,** just about that time, **that Elisha passed to Shunem,** a city in the northern part of the Plain of Jezreel, on the slope of the Little Hermon, **where was a great woman,** one of considerable local prominence; **and she constrained him to eat bread,** to partake of her hospitality. **And so it was that as oft as he passed by,** probably on his way to and from Mount Carmel, **he turned in thither to eat bread.** V. 9. **And she,** after this had happened a number of times, **said unto her husband, Behold, now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God,** not a fraud, a wandering false prophet, such as may have infested the roads, just as they do to-day, **which passeth by us continually.** V. 10. **Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.** What she suggested was a walled upper chamber, one built upon the flat roof of the house, which could be reached by an outside stairway, with walls which would be a protection against every kind of weather. V. 11. **And it fell on a day,** it happened at another time, **that he came in thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there,** resting from his long journey. V. 12. **And he said to Gehazi,** his servant, of whom nothing else is known, **Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him,** that is, Gehazi, who thereupon communicated to her the rest of Elisha's words. V. 13. **And he said unto him,** before he went down, **Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care,** she had shown them all possible careful consideration, the most painstaking hospitality; **what is to be done for thee? What would she ask in return? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the host?** Elisha had great influence with the most important men in the country and might easily have gotten favors for the woman. **And she answered, I dwell among mine own**

people. She was well content with her position among the lowly and did not long for life at court. V. 14. **And he said, What, then, is to be done for her?** In what way could he show his appreciation of the kindness shown? **And Gehazi answered,** making a conjecture which was based upon the general opinion in the nation, **Verily, she hath no child,** a fact which was considered a disgrace, if not a curse of God, in Israel, **and her husband is old.** There seemed to be little hope for the Shunammite to enjoy the blessing of a child. V. 15. **And he said,** desiring to communicate with her directly, **Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door,** her modesty and respect not permitting her to advance into the room. V. 16. **And he said, About this season, according to the time of life,** in the natural course of events, **thou shalt embrace a son. And she,** almost overwhelmed by the prospect which exceeded her fondest hopes, **said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.** She feared the disappointment following unfulfilled hopes. V. 17. **And the woman conceived and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.** In this way did the Lord reward the woman for her kindness to His servant. It is He who also to-day gives children, the fruit of the womb, to believing parents, as His reward, and they will appreciate them accordingly.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON RESTORED TO LIFE. V. 18. **And when the child was grown,** having become a boy of some size, **it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers,** at the time of harvest, the hottest time of the year. V. 19. **And he said unto his father, My head, my head!** He was evidently suffering from a sunstroke. **And he,** probably believing it to be a passing attack, **said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.** V. 20. **And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees,** where she held him in apprehensive fear, **till noon, and then died.** V. 21. **And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God,** intending to keep his death secret for a while, at least until she had started on her trip, **and shut the door upon him, and went out.** She had her plan made and did not intend to let any one or anything interfere with her preparations. V. 22. **And she called unto her husband and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men,** for since it was harvest, she would be satisfied with only one servant to accompany her, instead of the customary two, **and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God and come again.** V. 23. **And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor sabbath,** the times when religious assemblies were held and the people came to the prophets for instruction. **And she said, It shall be well,** literally, "Peace," that is, Never mind, don't worry! V. 24. **Then she saddled an ass and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me,** literally, "Do not hinder the riding," he should have the beast keep up a regular, swift pace, **except I bid thee.** V. 25. **So she went and came unto the man of God to Mount Carmel,** some twenty miles to the west. **And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi, his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite.** V 26. **Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?** These were the usual questions seeking information concerning the welfare of such as one had not seen for a while. **And she answered,** when Gehazi put these questions to her, **It is well,** again equal to: Never mind; don't worry! an expression by which she wanted to pacify the questioner without giving definite information. V. 27. **And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet,** falling down before him and taking hold of his knees in the overwhelming power of her grief. **But Gehazi came near to thrust her away,** considering it improper for the prophet to be urged in that manner. **And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her,** full of bitter questionings, **and the Lord hath hid it from me and hath not told me.** V. 28. **Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?** She did not state the cause of her bitterness outright, but Elisha could easily draw his conclusions. She had not asked for a son, but now that she had lost the child of her old age, she felt more deeply stricken than before. V. 29. **Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins,** for a rapid trip, **and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way. If thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again;** he was to let no delay interfere with his journey, for he was the representative of the prophet, and his mission required haste and concentration. **And lay my staff upon the face of the child.** The laying of the prophet's staff on the boy's face was not intended to act as a magic, but had the purpose of taking from the minds of men all superstitious ideas. V. 30. **And the mother of the child,** fearing that the prophet would not personally go to Shunem, **said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.** She insisted that he come in person. **And he arose and followed her.** V. 31. **And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing,** no reaction, no response; the Lord did not intend the miracle to be performed in

this way. **Wherefore he went again to meet him and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.** V. 32. **And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead,** not merely unconscious as Elisha may have hoped, **and laid upon his bed.** V. 33. **He went in therefore and shut the door upon them twain,** himself and the dead boy, **and prayed unto the Lord.** V. 34. **And he went up,** namely, on the bed, **and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands,** to impart warmth to the corpse; **and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm,** recovering from the chill of death. V. 35. **Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro,** as one under the stress of a great emotion, awaiting the fulfilment of his prayer; **and went up and stretched himself upon him. And the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.** V. 36. **And he called Gehazi and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.** V. 37. **Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground,** overcome by emotions of wonder and gratitude, **and took up her son, and went out.** Such miracles as that here recorded, but much more those related of Jesus of Nazareth, are the guarantee of the general resurrection at the end of the days.

Among the Sons of the Prophets. — V. 38. **And Elisha came again,** at some other time, **to Gilgal,** in the hill country of Central Canaan. **And there was a dearth in the land,** a severe famine; **and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him,** receiving instruction from him as their teacher. **And he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets,** who evidently took their meals in common. V. 39. **And one,** one of the pupils, **went out into the field to gather herbs,** any greens which might still be available, **and found a wild vine,** a plant on the order of a grape-vine, either a wild cucumber or the poisonous colocynth, **and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage; for they knew them not,** they were not familiar with the plant and its dangerous properties. V. 40. **So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!** From the bitterness and the immediate evil effect they concluded that the food was poisonous and fatal. **And they could not eat thereof.** V. 41. **But he said, Then bring meal,** this being merely an outward symbol or token of the miracle which was performed. **And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot,** there was no longer any evil effect from eating the food it contained. V. 42. **And there came a man from Baal-shalisha,** a district somewhat to the west of Gilgal, **and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits,** for these, by Law, belonged to the servants of Jehovah, **twenty loaves of barley and full ears of corn in the husk thereof,** roasted ears of grain, which he carried in a sack. **And he,** Elisha, **said, Give unto the people that they may eat.** V. 43. **And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men?** The quantity was not large enough to feed such a great number of people. **He said again, Give the people that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord,** He had revealed this fact to Elisha, **They shall eat and shall leave thereof.** V. 44. **So he set it before them, and they did eat,** the quantity being increased in a miraculous manner in the course of the meal, **and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord,** as in the case of the greater miracles of Christ, Matt. 14, 16 ff.; 15, 36 f.; John 6, 11. 12. The Lord, according to His bountiful goodness, takes care of His children, for He is fully able to satisfy all their wants.

CHAPTER 5.

Naaman Healed of His Leprosy.

The Testimony of the Slave Girl. — V. 1. **Now, Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria,** the commander-in-chief of the Syrian forces, **was a great man with his master,** he occupied an influential position in the king's service, **and honorable,** highly respected, **because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria,** in gaining the victory over Ahab and his forces, 1 Kings 22, 35. 36. **He was also a mighty man in valor,** an excellent military chief; **but he was a leper,** a fact which made him unfit for the fulfilment of many of his duties. V. 2. **And the Syrians had gone out by companies,** on expeditions for the purpose of making plunder, **and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid,** a young girl; **and she waited on Naaman's wife,** performing the work of a house-slave. V. 3. **And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord, Naaman, were with the prophet that is in Samaria,** for Elisha had his home there, **for he would recover him of his leprosy,** so that he would be healed and could perform his duties as of old. V. 4. **And one,** that is, Naaman, **went in and told his lord,** the king, **saying, Thus and thus said**

the maid that is of the land of Israel. He placed the proposition before the king for his approval or disapproval. V. 5. **And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel.** He was very anxious to have Naaman restored to his former health and vigor. **And he,** Naaman, **departed, and took with him ten talents of silver** (almost $20,000) **and six thousand pieces of gold** (estimated at between $36,000 and $44,000) **and ten changes of raiment,** special festival dresses. V. 6. **And he brought the letter to the king of Israel,** who since Ahab's defeat was in a certain state of dependence upon the Syrian king, **saying, Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman, my servant, to thee that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.** The king of Syria held the king of Israel responsible for this healing, since he probably thought that he had but to summon the prophet and command him to perform the miracle. V. 7. **And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes,** out of fright and sadness, **and said, Am I God to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?** He demanded something which only God could do, and therefore plainly made the matter an issue. **Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.** Note that the little slave-girl took the opportunity of testifying to Jehovah's prophet, thus becoming instrumental in leading Naaman to find the truth — a fine example for people in our days.

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN. — V. 8. **And it was so, when Elisha, the man of God, had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes,** being in despair on account of the apparently impossible feat which was expected of him, **that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes?** in his opinion an act of foolish fear. **Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel,** a servant of the true and almighty God. V. 9. **So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot,** with his entire retinue, **and stood at the door of the house of Elisha,** too proud, as it seems, to enter the poor hut, but expecting the prophet to deal with him in a manner befitting his rank. V. 10. **And Elisha,** utterly unimpressed by the show of wealth and power, **sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee,** return to the former state of firmness and health, **and thou shalt be clean.** From this Naaman was to learn that his healing would not be a matter of magic nor dependent upon the person of Elisha, but that it was a free gift of the God of Israel. V. 11. **But Naaman was wroth,** which shows in what state of mind he had come to Samaria, as the proud general demanding aid, not as a suppliant pleading for help, **and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord, his God, and strike his hand over the place,** moving it back and forth over the infected spot with a gesture of conjuring, **and recover the leper.** He thought such religious ceremonies, together with some application of magic, were essential, especially in his case. V. 12. **Are not Abana** (or Amana) **and Pharpar,** mountain streams with clear, fresh water, **rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?** He thought the cure consisted in the removal of the filth in the flesh by the outward application of water. **So he turned and went away in a rage.** V. 13. **And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father,** an address at the same time intimate and respectful, **if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing,** something particularly difficult to perform, **wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?** V. 14. **Then went he down,** from the hill on which Samaria was situated, **and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God,** the number seven being the signature of the works of God; **and his flesh came again,** it was restored to its full healthy condition, **like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.** V. 15. **And he returned to the man of God,** to Samaria, **he and all his company, and came and stood before him. And he said,** in the conviction which had been forced upon him by his recent experiences, **Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel,** faith in the true God had been wrought in his heart. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant,** in the form of a rich present. V. 16. **But he said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand,** as His humble and devoted servant, **I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused,** not wishing to have even the suspicion of selfishness and of seeking personal gain resting upon him. V. 17. **And Naaman said,** in a humble tone, which contrasted strangely with his former overbearing behavior, **Shall there not, then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord.** He did not ascribe magical powers to the soil of Israel, but wanted his act of building an altar from this earth to be a confession of his faith in Jehovah. V. 18. **In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon,** the chief

idol of Syria, **to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon,** namely, while assisting the king in his act of worship: **when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon,** not in personal worship, but in serving his master, **the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.** He freely confessed this scruple of a tender conscience, in order not to have it appear that he was denying the Lord whom he now had so openly accepted. V. 19 a. **And he,** Elisha, **said unto him, Go in peace.** We see from this entire story, first, that the Lord demands simple and absolute obedience to His Word; secondly, that He had mercy also upon the poor heathen; and finally, that He expects us to watch very carefully lest we become partakers of other men's sins.

Gehazi's Covetousness. — V. 19 b. **So he departed from him a little way.** Naaman started out on his return journey to Damascus. V. 20. **But Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, said,** thinking in his own heart, **Behold, my master hath spared Naaman, this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought,** the rich presents having aroused the covetousness of Gehazi; **but, as the Lord liveth,** a blasphemous oath in this connection, **I will run after him and take somewhat of him,** in order to become possessed of at least some of that wealth. V. 21. **So Gehazi followed after Naaman,** running quickly to overtake him. **And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him,** a mark of respect; for he honored the master in the servant, **and said, Is all well?** The evident excitement of Gehazi made it appear as though something had happened. V. 22. **And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets,** this statement, of course, being a deliberate falsehood; **give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver** (almost $2,000) **and two changes of garments.** V. 23. **And Naaman said, Be content,** let yourself be persuaded, be pleased to accept, **take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags,** probably basket-like sacks, **with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants,** a pretty heavy burden; **and they bare them before him.** V. 24. **And when he came to the tower,** the hill before the city, **he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house,** keeping them in a safe place. **And he let the men go, and they departed.** V. 25. **But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said,** again lying, **Thy servant went nowhither,** literally "neither hither nor thither," protesting that he did not so much as leave the premises. V. 26. **And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee,** his body, indeed, not being present, but his spirit, **when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?** For all of these might be purchased with the money obtained by Gehazi, after the manner of the false prophets, with whom the true servants of the Lord would surely never be identified, neither at that time nor ever. V. 27. **The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever.** That was God's punishment for his deceit and his avarice. **And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.** Men among the servants of the Lord who have denied faith and a good conscience and have placed their affection upon the things of this world will receive their punishment by the hand of God, if not now, then surely hereafter.

CHAPTER 6.

Further Events at Elisha's Time.

The Swimming of the Ax-head. — V. 1. **And the sons of the prophets,** probably those living at Jericho, **said unto Elisha, Behold, now, the place where we dwell with thee,** literally, "before thy face," under his supervision, **is too strait for us,** the present buildings no longer offered sufficient room for their increasing number. V. 2. **Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan and take thence every man a beam,** by cutting down some of the large trees near the river and preparing them for the walls of the new building, **and let us make us a place there where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye,** he gladly gave his consent. V. 3. **And one said, Be content,** let it please thee, **I pray thee, and go with thy servants,** they believed that the presence of the prophet would bring blessing and success to their labor. **And he answered, I will go.** V. 4. **So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood,** felling some of the trees which grew along its banks. V. 5. **But as one was felling a beam, the ax-head,** slipping its helve, **fell into the water; and he cried and said, Alas, master, for it was borrowed!** He had begged its use for the work at hand, since he was too poor to buy an ax. V. 6. **And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he,** Elisha, **cut down a stick and cast it in thither,** where the iron had sunk to the bottom; **and the iron did swim,**

lifted up by the water against the course of nature, it floated on the surface. V. 7. **Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand and took it.** We see here that the Lord is willing to help even in small things, in the little embarrassments of life.

THE BLINDNESS OF THE SYRIANS. — V. 8. **Then the king of Syria,** still during the reign of Jehoram of Israel, **warred against Israel,** more by expeditions which had the plundering of the country for their object than by regular campaigns, **and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.** He fixed the location of his various encampments in advance and informed his captains in secret council. V. 9. **And the man of God,** Elisha, **sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place,** namely, for the purpose of occupying it with a sufficiently strong body of men to keep the Syrians away; **for thither the Syrians are come down,** he knew the places which they had selected for their encampments. V. 10. **And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of,** always occupying these places in advance, **and saved himself there,** thus frustrating the plans of the Syrians, **not once nor twice,** it happened time and again. V. 11. **Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing,** the matter vexed him severely. **And he called his servants and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?** He believed that there was a traitor in their own camp, who made known their plans to the enemy. V. 12. **And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber,** he possessed such a great amount of prophetic wisdom that he knew all the secrets of the Syrian king. V. 13. **And he said, Go and spy where he is that I may send and fetch him,** intending to get Elisha into his power and thus to prevent him from making known his plans to the king of Israel. **And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan,** some twelve miles north of Samaria. V. 14. **Therefore sent he,** the king of Syria, **thither horses and chariots and a great host,** a large body of infantry; **and they came by night, and compassed the city about.** V. 15. **And when the servant of the man of God,** either Gehazi or some prophet-disciple, **was risen early and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master, how shall we do?** He felt that they were now in the power of the enemies and could not escape. V. 16. **And he, Elisha, answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.** Cp. Num. 14, 9; 2 Chron. 32, 7; Ps. 3, 6; 27, 3. V. 17. **And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see,** that his physical eyes might behold what his spirit should have known. **And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw,** what was ordinarily hidden from the eyes of mortals; **and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha,** the hosts of the heavenly angels had been sent to protect him. V. 18. **And when they,** the Syrians, **came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord and said, Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness. And He,** Jehovah, **smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha;** they were in a condition that their eyes could not distinguish properly, although the ability to see was not taken from them. V. 19. **And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city,** he prepared deliberately to mislead them. **Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria,** while they were virtually his captives. V. 20. **And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Lord, open the eyes of these men,** of the Syrians who had followed him so trustfully and blindly, **that they may see. And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.** V. 21. **And the king of Israel said unto Elisha when he saw them, My father,** namely, in the spiritual sense, **shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?** He was eager to make use of the advantage offered by the presence of the enemy, for they were now in his power. V. 22. **And he,** with the proper humaneness which would consider it highly improper to take a mean advantage of an enemy, **answered, Thou shalt not smite them. Wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow?** The meaning is: If thou shouldst put these to death, could thy action be justified as in the case of prisoners of war? **Set bread and water before them,** preparing them a bounteous meal, **that they may eat and drink and go to their master.** V. 23. **And he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel;** they realized that such expeditions were useless as long as Elisha was in the country and revealed all their plans. The angel of the Lord encamps round about those that fear Him. The true children of God keep many a great misfortune from entire countries.

THE GREAT FAMINE IN SAMARIA. — V. 24. **And it came to pass after this,** some years after these expeditions had ceased, **that Benhadad, king of Syria, gathered all his**

host, and went up, and besieged Samaria, evidently with the object of making the land of Israel tributary altogether. V. 25. **And there was a great famine in Samaria; and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head,** the poorest part of an unclean animal, **was sold for fourscore pieces of silver** (some $50), **and the fourth part of a cab** (about ten cubic inches) **of dove's dung for five pieces of silver** (a little over $3). V. 26. **And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king!** V. 27. **And he said,** in bitterness verging on despair, **If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee, out of the barn-floor,** the product of threshing, grain or flour, **or out of the wine-press?** It was the bitter irony of a soul beyond hope. V. 28. **And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman,** pointing out one whom she accused, **said unto me, Give thy son that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.** What the Lord had foretold and threatened Deut. 28, 57, had come to pass in all its horror. V. 29. **So we boiled my son and did eat him,** the most revolting form of cannibalism. **And I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son that we may eat him; and she hath hid her son.** So this unnatural mother, driven practically to insanity by excessive hunger, demanded justice, the fulfilment of the horrible bargain. V. 30. **And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes,** in uncontrollable grief and horror; **and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within,** as his undergarment, **upon his flesh,** the symbol of humility, which in his case, however, was more in the form of a mechanical exercise of penance. V. 31. **Then he said,** in an unreasonable rage against the prophet whom he, in some way, held responsible for the terrible conditions now disclosed, **God do so and more also to me if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him this day!** He pledged himself, by a terrible oath, to murder Elisha. V. 32. **But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders,** the magistrates of the city, **sat with him,** probably for the purpose of asking his counsel and assistance. **And the king sent a man from before him; but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders,** having received a revelation from God, **See ye how this son of a murderer,** namely, Jehoram, the son of Ahab, **hath sent to take away mine head? Look when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door,** not permitting him to enter and commit the crime which he had been commissioned to commit. **Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?** Jehoram was following upon the heels of the messenger. V. 33. **And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him; and he,** the king, **said, Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?** This was probably the course advised by Elisha, the king having been ready to capitulate some time before. The king's words were the cry of one in the depths of despair. Note: Although it is customary to this day to place the blame for many misfortunes on the Christians, the latter are, in truth, a blessing and a protection for every country.

CHAPTER 7.

The Relief of Samaria.

The Flight of the Syrian Army. — V. 1. **Then,** while the king of Israel and the elders of the city were in the house of the prophet, **Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour,** a little more than eight quarts of the finest wheat-flour, **be sold for a shekel** (about 64 cents), **and two measures of barley,** almost seventeen quarts, **for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria,** where the public market was usually held. V. 2. **Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned,** one of his retinue, an adjutant, **answered the man of God and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven,** causing barley and flour to rain down from the sky, **might this thing be?** This was not merely reasonable doubt, but open, bitter scorn, the scoffing and jesting of unbelief. **And he, Elisha, said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes,** namely, the promised cheapness and plenty, **but shalt not eat thereof,** he would be punished for his unbelief. The manner in which this was brought about is next related. V. 3. **And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate,** just outside the city wall, for they were not permitted to have their dwelling in the city, Lev. 13, 46; Num. 5, 3. **And they,** since they no longer received any food from the people in the city, **said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?** V. 4. **If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city,** hunger stared them in the face there as well, **and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now, therefore, come and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians,** deserting to the enemy in this extremity; **if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.** V. 5. **And they rose up**

in the twilight, in the dusk of evening, when they could no longer be seen from the city, **to go unto the camp of the Syrians; and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria,** the place of the outposts nearest the city, **behold, there was no man there,** the entire camp was deserted. V. 6. **For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host;** for so the soldiers explained to themselves the continuous and increasing rushing and roaring in the air, their ears being deceived through the power of God. **And they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites,** whose forces might be expected from the north, **and the kings of the Egyptians,** who would come upon them from the south, **to come upon us.** It was a panic brought about by the direct interference of God. V. 7. **Wherefore they arose,** with one frightened impulse, **and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their asses, even the camp as it was,** their terror being so great and so unreasonable that they abandoned everything, **and fled for their life.** V. 8. **And when these lepers,** those spoken of above, **came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent and did eat and drink,** for they found food in abundance, **and carried thence silver and gold and raiment, and went and hid it,** as their legitimate plunder; **and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it,** for the ease with which the deserted camp could be plundered stimulated their covetousness. V. 9. **Then they said one to another,** their conscience reminding them of the duty which they owed their fellow-citizens, **We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings,** which they were bound to communicate to the people of Samaria as soon as possible, **and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us,** they would be sure to be found out and suffer punishment, and justly so. **Now, therefore, come that we may go and tell the king's household,** make a report to the palace of the king. V. 10. **So they came and called unto the porter,** the watchman of the guard, **of the city,** the man stationed at the gate; **and they told them,** all the watchmen who hurried up at their call, **saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man,** no person to be seen or heard, **but horses tied and asses tied, and the tents as they were.** V. 11. **And he called the porters,** all the members of the guard; **and they told it to the king's house within,** they made the report required in such cases. There is nothing impossible with the Lord; He is able to help when men are at their wits' end and have given up all hope.

THE GREAT PLENTY IN SAMARIA. — V. 12. **And the king,** having received the astounding news, **arose in the night and said unto his servants,** his attendants, the members of his council, **I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us;** he suspected a ruse. **They know that we be hungry, therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive,** for it would then be an easy matter to surprise and to overwhelm the defenders of the city, weakened as they were by hunger, **and get into the city.** V. 13. **And one of his servants,** a member of his council, **answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed,** that is, the scouts would either return safe to the city and share the fate of the others by suffering death by famine, or they would fall into the hands of the enemies and be slain, in which case they would be no worse off than those who had already fallen,) **and let us send and see.** V. 14. **They took therefore two chariot horses,** two chariots with the necessary horses and probably a single horseman. **And the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.** V. 15. **And they went after them unto Jordan,** for it was an easy matter to follow the path of their flight; **and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels,** personal belongings of the fleeing soldiers, **which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned and told the king.** V. 16. **And the people,** who had undoubtedly awaited the return of the scouts with the greatest eagerness, **went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians,** loading themselves with booty. **So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord,** v. 1. V. 17. **And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned,** his adjutant, **to have the charge of the gate,** to maintain order and prevent accidents; **and the people,** overexcited as they were and unwilling to listen to his commands, **trode upon him in the gate,** roughly bearing him down and crushing him to death. **And he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.** V. 18. **And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel and a measure of fine flour for a shekel shall be to-morrow**

about this time in the gate of Samaria, v. 19. and that lord answered the man of God and said, Now, behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. V. 20. And so it fell out unto him; for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died. The circumstantial repetition of this sad event serves to impress its lesson; for God will not be mocked, as many a blasphemer has found out to his sorrow, often, unfortunately, when it was too late.

CHAPTER 8.

Hazael King of Syria, Jehoram and Ahaziah in Judah.

Elisha's Powerful Influence at Court. V. 1. Then spake Elisha, more exactly, he had spoken, for this incident had happened some years before, unto the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn, journeying to any country where the famine would not be so severe; for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years. V. 2. And the woman, apparently a widow at that time, arose, and did after the saying of the man of God; and she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines, which was near, and whose fertile lands were usually not struck so heavily with scarcity, seven years. V. 3. And it came to pass at the seven years' end that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines; and she went forth to cry unto the king, the chief judge, the highest court, for her house and for her land. Her property had either come into the possession of the crown, or some persons had illegally established themselves in the possession of her inheritance. V. 4. And the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done, he was anxious to know more about the personal life of the great prophet. V. 5. And it came to pass, by the direction of God, as he was telling the king how he, Elisha, had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life cried to the king for her house and for her land, her plea was brought to the king's attention at just this opportune moment. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman and this is her son, who had accompanied his mother, whom Elisha restored to life. V. 6. And when the king asked the woman, she told him, she made her complaint. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, giving the adjustment of her case into the hands of one of his eunuchs, saying, Restore all that was hers, all her property, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now; she was to receive an amount of grain and produce equal to the full crop borne by her fields during her absence. The king had been so impressed with the recital of Elisha's deeds that he at least showed the woman the justice which she demanded. In a similar way even hardened sinners are occasionally stirred by evident works of God and try to do right for a time. But if one has become accustomed to sin and disobedience, it is only true repentance which is able to work a renewal of heart.

Hazael Anointed King. — V. 7. And Elisha came to Damascus, the capital of Syria; and Benhadad, the king of Syria, was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither, he had reached the district in which the city was located. V. 8. And the king said unto Hazael, one of his high officers, perhaps even commander-in-chief of the army, Take a present in thine hand and go, meet the man of God, whose fame had been spread far and wide, and enquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? The question was probably intended to convey the request as well that the prophet should pray for the restoration of his health. V. 9. So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, the choicest products which the city afforded, forty camels' burden, thus making a very impressive display of the proposed gift, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad, king of Syria, hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? V. 10. And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover, literally, "Not wilt thou live"; howbeit, the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die, not, indeed, of this disease, but by violence. V. 11. And he settled his countenance steadfastly until he was ashamed. If this is said of Elisha, it means that he fixed such a piercing look upon Hazael, showing that he knew of the ambition and treachery by which he intended to murder his master that Hazael shrank from the searching look. If Hazael is the subject, it means that he did not so much as move one muscle of his face, although he realized that Elisha knew his wickedness. And the man of God wept, since the prophetic Spirit revealed to him what would happen to his countrymen in the future. V. 12. And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the chil-

dren of Israel, after his accession to the throne. **Their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child,** practising all the cruelties of the most bitter wars. Cp. chap. 10, 32. 33; 13, 3. 4. 7. 22. V. 13. **And Hazael,** a hypocrite and actor, **said, But what, is thy servant a dog,** a lowly, contemptible person, **that he should do this great thing,** wield such a mighty power? **And Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria,** a statement which revealed the secret, ambitious plans of Hazael. V. 14. **So he departed from Elisha and came to his master, who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover,** an answer which did not accord with the truth and was purposely framed to lull Benhadad into security. V. 15. **And it came to pass on the morrow that he took a thick cloth,** a heavy, woven coverlet, **and dipped it in water,** which increased its heaviness still more, **and spread it on his face so that he died. And Hazael reigned in his stead,** usurping the throne. Note: It is God who directs the affairs of this world, even when wickedness apparently is in power; for the punishments which strike the unrepentant sinners serve to emphasize the government of the one Lord on high.

THE REIGN OF JEHORAM AND OF AHAZIAH. V. 16. **And in the fifth year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign,** being coregent with his father for two years. V. 17. **Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem,** six of these alone. V. 18. **And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,** in all the idolatrous wickedness which they practised, **as did the house of Ahab; for the daughter of Ahab was his wife,** the evil of mixed marriages being apparent here also; **and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.** V. 19. **Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake,** He did not want it to lose its existence as a nation, **as He promised him to give him alway a light and to his children,** namely, by keeping his descendants on the throne. Nevertheless, the country had to pay dearly for the sin of its king. V. 20. **In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah,** regaining its independence, **and made a king over themselves.** V. 21. **So Joram went over to Zair,** a fortified city of Idumea, **and all the chariots with him,** the full strength of his army; **and he rose by night and smote the Edomites which compassed him about,** who were threatening to take him and his whole army captive, **and the captains of the chariots. And the people,** that is, the Judean soldiers, **fled into their tents,** to their homes, barely escaping an utter defeat. V. 22. **Yet,** and so it happened that, **Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah,** an ancient royal city of the Canaanites, in the Plain of Judah, near the frontier of Philistia, **revolted at the same time.** So Judah was losing in prestige and power right along. V. 23. **And the rest of the acts of Joram and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 24. **And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David,** being given an honorable burial; **and Ahaziah** (or, Azariah), **his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 25. **In the twelfth year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, did Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, begin to reign.** V. 26. **Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign,** he being the youngest son of Jehoram, 2 Chron. 21, 17; **and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter,** that is, the granddaughter, **of Omri, king of Israel,** who is here mentioned because he was the founder of the royal house to which the queen-mother belonged. V. 27. **And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab,** in idolatrous wickedness, **and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as did the house of Ahab; for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab,** and therefore under the influence of the unspeakable Jezebel. V. 28. **And he went with Joram, the son of Ahab, to the war against Hazael, king of Syria, in Ramoth-gilead,** the fortified city in the country east of Jordan, which Ahab had already tried to recover; **and the Syrians wounded Joram,** after having taken possession of the city once more, chap. 9, 14. V. 29. **And King Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel,** his summer residence, **of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah,** that is, the Ramoth in the country of Gilead, **when he fought against Hazael, king of Syria. And Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram, the son of Ahab,** his brother-in-law, **in Jezreel, because he was sick,** suffering from the wounds which he had received, the armies meanwhile remaining in the field. When men ignore and reject the blessings of God and despise His mercies, God shows them that He is very well able to punish them severely, to let justice take its course in their case.

CHAPTER 9.

Jehu Becomes King of Israel.

The Announcement of Jehu's Elevation. V. 1. **And Elisha, the prophet, called one of the children of the prophets,** a disciple at one of the prophet schools, **and said unto him, Gird up thy loins,** in preparing for a speedy journey afoot, **and take this box,** a small receptacle like a jug, **of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead,** in the country east of Jordan: v. 2. **and when thou comest thither, look out there,** pick out by looking him up, **Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in,** that is, into his house or tent, **and make him arise up from among his brethren,** his companions in arms, **and carry him to an inner chamber,** causing him to go to a place where they would be undisturbed. V. 3. **Then take the box of oil and pour it on his head,** its contents being the usual anointing oil, **and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.** Cp. 1 Kings 19, 16. **Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not,** in order to avoid all discussion of the matter. V. 4. **So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.** V. 5. **And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting,** apparently in a council of war; **and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain,** Jehu being an officer of the army. **And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain,** thus singling him out for this special message. V. 6. **And he arose and went into the house,** as had been determined upon before by the Lord; **and he,** the disciple of the prophet, **poured the oil on his head and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel.** V. 7. **And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab, thy master,** in all his relatives and descendants then living, **that I may avenge the blood of My servants, the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel,** who had made it her purpose and object to eradicate the true worship of Jehovah. Cp. 1 Kings 18, 4; 19, 10. V. 8. **For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,** from the young and immature to the very old, down to the very last man; v. 9. **and I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,** 1 Kings 14, 10, **and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah,** 1 Kings 16, 3. 11. V. 10. **And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel; and there shall be none to bury her,** to give her an honorable interment. **And he opened the door and fled,** lest he be involved in questions with which he was not competent to deal and regarding whose solution he had no authority. Strict obedience to the Word of God is the prime requisite in a Christian.

Death of Joram. — V. 11. **Then Jehu came forth,** out of the inner chamber, **to the servants of his lord,** his fellow-councilors and companions in arms; **and one said unto him, Is all well?** They all were anxious to know whether it was a favorable message which he had received. **Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?** The young prophet had been wild and unusual in his behavior, a fact which naturally did not escape their observation. **And he said unto them, Ye know the man and his communication.** He wanted to sound them out whether they had already received notice of the information which he had received and his promised elevation to the position of king. V. 12. **And they said, It is false; tell us now.** They denied the charge, but on their part demanded the truth. He could not escape them so easily. **And he,** unable to help himself against their importunities, **said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.** V. 13. **Then they hasted, and took every man his garment,** the upper garment, which was really only a large square piece of cloth, **and put it under him on the top of the stairs,** namely, those of the house in which their meeting had been held, thus improvising a throne and stairway and giving him homage, **and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king!** Thus the garments of the generals served both as a pathway and as a carpet from the place where Jehu was standing when he made his announcement to the head of the stairway. V. 14. **So Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram,** for by permitting himself to be proclaimed as king he rebelled against the authority of the reigning monarch. **(Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael, king of Syria,** who had again made an attempt to gain control of the city. V. 15. **But King Joram,** just at the time when this incident occurred, **was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael, king of Syria,** chap. 8, 29.) **And Jehu said, If it be your minds,** if they agreed with him, if they were sincere in their rebellion against King Joram, **then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel,** to make known the fact that Jehu had been proclaimed king and thus to warn Joram. V. 16. **So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there,** practically recovered from his wounds, but still unable or unwilling to return to the army. **And Ahaziah, king of Judah, was come down to see**

Joram, chap. 8, 29. V. 17. **And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he,** faithful in the performance of his duty while the kings were enjoying their visit in the palace, **spied the company of Jehu as he came and said,** making a report at once as his work required, **I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?** The question referred to the condition of affairs in camp, whether his coming had the purpose of announcing a new attack by the Syrians. V. 18. **So there went one on horseback to meet him and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu,** energetic and resourceful as he was, **said, What hast thou to do with peace?** He should not worry about it, should not make it his business. **Turn thee behind me;** for by joining his little band he would be prevented from bringing any alarming report to the king. **And the watchman,** observing the actions of Jehu and the messenger from his post, **told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.** V. 19. **Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them,** Jehu and his men, **and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu,** with the same energy and intention as before, **answered, What hast thou to do with peace? Turn thee behind me.** V. 20. **And the watchman,** again observing the strange behavior of the messenger, **told, saying, He came even unto them and cometh not again; and the driving,** the advancing of the small band with the chariot of Jehu in the lead, **is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi;** for **he driveth furiously,** with the fierce recklessness which characterized him. V. 21. **And Joram said, Make ready,** equivalent to our: Put on the harness, hitch up! **And his chariot was made ready. And Joram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah, went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu,** that is, to meet him as quickly as possible, for they had now grown apprehensive, **and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite,** which was now a part of the royal park. V. 22. **And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu?** He was anxious to know the state of affairs, still believing that Jehu's strange behavior concerned the campaign against the Syrians. **And he,** boldly laying bare his hostility to the king, **answered, What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?** Most of the guilt really fell upon her, for she had introduced idolatry in its worst forms, which also included the practise of immoral customs and other heathen rites and ceremonies. V. 23. **And Joram turned his hands and fled,** he tried to get away with all speed, for he suddenly realized the seriousness of the situation, **and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah!** They had been deceived, betrayed, they had fallen a prey to treason. V. 24. **And Jehu,** as the king turned to flee, **drew a bow with his full strength and smote Jehoram between his arms,** between the shoulder-blades, **and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.** V. 25. **Then said Jehu to Bidkar, his captain, Take up and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite,** the part of the royal park which had formerly been his vineyard; **for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab, his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him,** 1 Kings 21, 29. V. 26. **Surely,** that was the Lord's oath, **I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord,** for the sons had evidently also been put to death at the time when Naboth was executed; **and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord,** the punishment would strike the house of Ahab on this very piece of ground. **Now, therefore, take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord.** Cp. 1 Kings 21, 19. Thus the sin of Ahab was visited upon his son Joram, who followed his father in his wickedness, just as God to-day visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him.

DEATH OF AHAZIAH AND JEZEBEL. — V. 27. **But when Ahaziah, the king of Judah, saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house,** some structure in or near the palace grounds. **And Jehu followed after him and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam,** some miles to the west. **And he fled to Megiddo and died there,** on the slope of Mount Carmel. It seems, from 2 Chron. 22, 9, that Ahaziah had first succeeded in reaching Samaria, but, having been found by Jehu's men, tried to escape to the northwest, where he was killed, as here related. He who sides with the enemies of God must expect to share the lot of such enemies. V. 28. **And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulcher with his fathers in the city of David.** V. 29. **And in the eleventh year of Joram, the son of Ahab, began Ahaziah to reign over Judah,** the difference between this statement and that of chap. 8, 25, being due to a difference in reckoning the first year of the reign of Joram. V. 30. **And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face,** applying a special preparation to her eyebrows and eyelids, **and tired her head,** by putting on the head-band and crown which held her elaborate head-dress in place, **and looked out at a window,** arrogant, self-willed, and defiant to the last,

hoping that the majesty of her position would save her. V. 31. **And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?** 1 Kings 16, 9—20, literally, "Is it peace, thou Zimri, murderer of his lord?" She wanted to terrify the rebel by reminding him of the tragic end of Zimri, whose rule lasted only seven days. V. 32. **And he lifted up his face to the window and said, Who is on my side, who? And there looked out to him,** in answer to his call, **two or three eunuchs,** two servants of the palace at one window and three at another, signifying their intention to do his bidding. V. 33. **And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down,** dashing her from the window to the pavement below; **and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses; and he trode her under foot,** causing the wheels of his chariot to pass over her and to extinguish the last spark of life. V. 34. **And when he was come in, he did eat and drink,** he first refreshed himself after his hard trip, **and said, Go, see now this cursed woman and bury her; for she is a king's daughter,** a Phenician princess, 1 Kings 16, 31. V. 35. **And they went to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands,** the rest having been eaten or dragged away by the savage dogs common in the Orient. V. 36. **Wherefore they came again and told him. And he,** who had not intended to refuse her burial or deliberately to fulfil the prediction in regard to her, **said, This is the word of the Lord which He spake by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel,** 1 Kings 21, 23; v. 37. **and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel;** there was no definite spot to keep her memory alive. Thus are the wicked punished who have seduced others to sin and worked harm to their souls.

CHAPTER 10.

The Reign of Jehu.

The Relatives of Ahab Slain. — V. 1. **And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria,** all his male descendants. **And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders,** to the prefect of the royal palace, the captain of the city, and the magistrates, **and to them that brought up Ahab's children,** their educators, or tutors, **saying,** v. 2. **Now, as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you,** all the princes of the royal blood being in Samaria at that time, **and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armor,** all the power by which they might expect to uphold the dynasty of Ahab, v. 3. **look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons,** the ablest among the sons of Joram, **and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.** This was a satirical and scornful challenge and at the same time a stratagem intended to find out the attitude of the most powerful men in Samaria over against the rule of Jehu. V. 4. **But they,** noting the object of the letter, **were exceedingly afraid and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him,** chap. 9, 24—27, **how, then, shall we stand?** V. 5. **And he that was over the house,** the prefect of the royal palace, **and he that was over the city,** the captain of the garrison, **the elders also,** the magistrates, **and the bringers up of the children,** all the tutors of the royal family, **sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants and will do all that thou shalt bid us,** thus submitting unconditionally. **We will not make any king; do thou that which is good in thine eyes.** V. 6. **Then he,** feeling it to be an important matter to be acknowledged by all the people as soon as possible, **wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine,** if they had chosen his part and stood on his side, **and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time.** He expected them to do homage to him, but only in such a manner as to convince all the people that the pretenders to the crown, without exception, were dead, and that the most influential men of the kingdom had entirely broken with the house of Ahab. **Now, the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up,** they were in their care, in their power. V. 7. **And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel,** a gruesome proof of their allegiance to Jehu. V. 8. **And there came a messenger and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons,** of all the male descendants of Ahab, of all the royal princes. **And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning,** it being the custom of the times to display the heads of the vanquished in the sight of all men. V. 9. **And it came to pass in the morning that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous,** as just men they could pass a correct judgment; **behold, I conspired against my master**

and slew him; but who slew all these? It was another trick to place himself in the most advantageous light by carefully concealing the main point, namely, that the men had been put to death by his command. V. 10. **Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab; for the Lord hath done that which He spake by His servant Elijah.** Even if some of the people felt inclined to blame him for the wholesale slaughter, they were to remember that nothing but the divine ordinance, the sentence of the Lord, had been carried out, 1 Kings 21, 19. 21. 29. V. 11. **So Jehu,** encouraged by his success up to this point, and feeling sure that the people would raise no objection, **slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel and all his great men,** all the most powerful officers of the fallen dynasty, **and his kinsfolks,** his nearest friends and adherents, **and his priests,** all those who remained of the heathen priests at his court, **until he left him none remaining.** V. 12. **And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria,** where he no longer feared any opposition. **And as he was at the shearing-house in the way,** probably a place of assembly for the shepherds of the entire district, v. 13. **Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they,** in total ignorance of what had happened at Jezreel, **answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah,** in this connection his cousins and other near relatives; **and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen,** to pay their respects, to make a friendly visit at the court. V. 14. **And he said,** to his companions, the members of his guard, **Take them alive. And they took them alive,** captured them in spite of any show of resistance, **and slew them at the pit of the shearing-house, at the cistern, even two and forty men; neither left he any of them.** Since they were friendly to the house of Ahab, he feared that they might resist his royal authority, and therefore he chose the simplest and most effective method to get rid of them. It was the judgment of God upon idolatrous people.

THE BAAL-WORSHIP DISCONTINUED. — V. 15. **And when he was departed thence,** after the slaughter of the forty-two relatives of Ahaziah, **he lighted on Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, coming to meet him,** Jer. 35, 1—19, whether by accident or on purpose is not indicated. **And he saluted him and said to him, Is thine heart right,** zealous, upright, fully agreeing in feeling and in purpose, **as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is.** The two were of the same opinion concerning the necessity of eradicating idolatry in the land. **If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand. And he took him up to him into the chariot,** thus honoring him highly before all the people. V. 16. **And he, Jehu, said, Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord. So they made him ride in his chariot,** not by force, of course, but by friendly persuasion and invitation. V. 17. **And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria,** all the relatives living in this city, **till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord which He spake to Elijah,** 1 Kings 21, 21. V. 18. **And Jehu gathered all the people together and said unto them,** hiding his real purpose under a pretense of zeal for idolatrous worship, **Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much,** this statement being intended to disarm all suspicion. V. 19. **Now, therefore, call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting; for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal. Whosoever shall be wanting,** every one of the prophets and priests of Baal who would be missing, **he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtilty,** as a stratagem, **to the intent that he might destroy the worshipers of Baal,** by lulling them into security and then slaying them. V. 20. **And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it,** inviting all the people of the country to partake in this great meeting. V. 21. **And Jehu sent through all Israel. And all the worshipers of Baal came,** believing that they would receive full recognition from Jehu, **so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal,** eager to take part in this solemn assembly; **and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.** Men regarded Jehu's entire conspiracy as a mere military revolution, and not as a reformation of the Church. V. 22. **And he said unto him that was over the vestry,** the man in charge of the vestments of the Baal-worship, **Bring forth vestments for all the worshipers of Baal,** to render them all the more conspicuous in the great assembly. **And he brought them forth vestments.** V. 23. **And Jehu went, and Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshipers of Baal, Search and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord but the worshipers of Baal only,** for he wanted no servant of Jehovah to be killed by mistake. V. 24. **And when they,** the servants of Baal, **went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him,** they were answerable with their very lives for the destruction of the idolaters. V. 25. **And it came**

to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, when the preparations for the customary sacrifices were completed, **that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in and slay them; let none come forth.** The members of the royal guard here attended to the duties enjoined upon them by the king of being executioners. **And they smote them with the edge of the sword,** with a relentless punishment; **and the guard and the captains cast them out,** throwing the corpses aside as they pressed forward, **and went to the city of the house of Baal,** they entered the temple proper, the sanctuary of Baal. V. 26. **And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal,** the idolatrous statues, **and burned them.** V. 27. **And they brake down the image of Baal,** his own picture, which was probably of stone, **and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught-house unto this day,** the turning of the temple into a public place of this kind making it forever unclean and abominable. V. 28. **Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel,** removing the worst idolatry from the midst of the northern kingdom. It was a judgment of God, a type of the last great punishment which will come upon the idolatrous world.

The Reign of Jehu. — V. 29. **Howbeit,** in spite of this excellent showing, **from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel and that were in Dan;** he did not abolish the steer-worship, his knowledge of the true God not extending to that point. V. 30. **And the Lord said unto Jehu,** most likely by a prophet, **Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in Mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in Mine heart,** accomplishing thereby a deed which is here readily recognized and acknowledged, **thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.** V. 31. **But Jehu took no heed to walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart;** his zeal for the Lord had not been an expression of unmixed devotion, but had largely been influenced by his own personal ambition; **for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.** V. 32. **In those days,** in consequence of the prevalent idolatry, **the Lord began to cut Israel short,** to cut off parts, by permitting hostile nations to take possession of remote districts. **And Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel,** his raids being carried out with boldness and meeting with success: v. 33. **from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon,** the river which formed the southern boundary, **even Gilead and Bashan,** all the territory of the two and one half tribes east of Jordan. V. 34. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might,** his political and military exploits, **are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 35. **And Jehu slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 36. **And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.** Even if a person has performed important services in the kingdom of God, all this will be overlooked and forgotten if he afterward opposes the will and the Word of God. By denying or ignoring better knowledge the guilt is merely increased.

CHAPTER 11.

The End of Athaliah of Judah.

Jehoash Becomes King. — V. 1. **And when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah,** herself the daughter of Jezebel and the granddaughter of Omri, chap. 8, 26. 27, **saw that her son was dead,** chap. 9, 27, **she arose and destroyed all the seed royal,** all the male members of the royal house, in order that she might retain her position of queen-mother and queen-regent. V. 2. **But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash** (or Jehoash), **the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain,** the younger princes who were here put to death in addition to the older relatives executed by Jehu, chap. 10, 14; **and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bed-chamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain;** his aunt saved his life by hiding him in the room where the bedding of the palace was stored, where no one lived. V. 3. **And he was with her,** with his nurse, who afterward became his attendant, hid **in the house of the Lord,** in the dwelling of the high priest, whose wife Jehosheba was, 2 Chron. 22, 11, six years, being kept in concealment during all this time. **And Athaliah did reign over the land.** V. 4. **And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard,** the officers and the most powerful part of the army, **and brought them to him into the house of the Lord,** his position as high priest making this step comparatively easy, **and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord,** pledging them to help in bringing the rightful heir to the throne, **and**

showed them the king's son, whose existence had been kept secret till then. V. 5. **And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do: A third part of you that enter in on the Sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house,** guarding the royal residence proper; v. 6. **and a third part shall be at the gate of Sur,** guarding the side-door of the palace; **and a third part at the gate behind the guard,** where the king's messengers were usually stationed, where they received the king's commands, the chief gate, the direct approach to the royal residence. **So shall ye keep the watch of the house that it be not broken down,** to ward off any attack which might be directed against the palace. V. 7. **And two parts of all you that go forth on the Sabbath,** being relieved of duty at the palace on the Sabbath, **even they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king.** V. 8. **And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and he that cometh within the ranges,** in an attempt to penetrate their ranks, **let him be slain. And be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in,** a careful execution of these commands being necessary for the success of the plan. V. 9. **And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada, the priest, commanded. And they took every man his men that were to come in on the Sabbath,** to go on duty, **with them that should go out on the Sabbath,** go off duty, **and came to Jehoiada, the priest.** V. 10. **And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give King David's spears and shields that were in the Temple of the Lord,** probably being deposited there by those retiring from service. V. 11. **And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king,** as he was brought from his place of concealment, **from the right corner,** from the wall on the right-hand side, **of the Temple to the left corner of the Temple, along by the altar and the Temple,** keeping the space between the sanctuary of the Temple and the altar of burnt offering free from all intruders. V. 12. **And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony,** either certain sections or the entire Five Books of Moses, Deut. 17, 19, **and they made him king and anointed him; and they clapped their hands and said, God save the king!** This acclamation of the people in the court was the same as in 1 Kings 1, 25. So the times of affliction were destined to merge into days of blessing and mercy once more; for it is God who gives a country good rulers.

ATHALIAH SLAIN. — V. 13. **And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people,** as they hailed the king with delight, **she came to the people into the Temple of the Lord,** driven by curiosity, to find out what the outcry was about. V. 14. **And when she looked, behold, the king,** who was still a very young boy, **stood by a pillar, as the manner was,** at the place reserved for the king by ancient usage, apparently a platform, **and the princes and the trumpeters by the king,** the latter being Levites or priests blowing the Temple trumpets, as on festival occasions, **and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew with trumpets. And Athaliah,** who took in the situation at a glance, **rent her clothes,** in great fear and terror, **and cried, Treason, treason!** V. 15. **But Jehoiada, the priest, commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges,** they should lead her out through the ranks, so that she would not be able to communicate with any adherents; **and him that followeth her,** making a show of taking her part, **kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord,** which would have been desecrated by the blood of the usurper and murderess. V. 16. **And they laid hands on her, they made way for her to escort her out; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house,** inside the city walls; **and there was she slain.** V. 17. **And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people that they should be the Lord's people;** he solemnly renewed the covenant which had been broken by the idolatry of Athaliah, **between the king also and the people,** pledging the king to rule according to the Law and the people to give a cheerful obedience to their lawful ruler. V. 18. **And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal,** the temple which had been erected to the heathen idol at Jerusalem, **and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly,** thus removing all the evidences of idol worship in the city of God, **and slew Mattan, the priest of Baal, before the altars. And the priest,** Jehoiada, **appointed officers over the house of the Lord,** thus renewing the position of overseers which had been created by David, 1 Chron. 25. V. 19. **And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the Lord, and came by the way of the gate of the guard,** the chief entrance to the royal palace, **to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings,** as acknowledged ruler of the kingdom of Judah. V. 20. **And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in**

quiet. **And they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house,** none of her adherents daring to resent her execution or to venture a hostile demonstration. V. 21. **Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.** The last member of the house of Ahab was now removed, and the legitimate authority of the house of David was restored. The Church of God usually emerges from persecutions intended to take her last strength filled with new power and zeal for the pure Word and Sacraments.

CHAPTER 12.

The Reign of Jehoash of Judah.

The Temple Repaired. — V. 1. **In the seventh year of Jehu,** the king of Israel who had eradicated Baal-worship in Israel, **Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name,** which is mentioned on account of the influence of the queen-mother in an Oriental harem, **was Zibiah of Beersheba.** V. 2. **And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada, the priest, instructed him;** as long as this staunch, faithful, God-fearing priest lived, he permitted himself to be guided by his instruction. V. 3. **But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places,** they persisted in using the hills for the erection and maintenance of altars, to Jehovah indeed, but against His wish. It was most unfortunate that a change in the behavior of Jehoash took place after the death of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. 24, 17—22. V. 4. **And Jehoash said to the priests,** in the first part of his reign, while he was still being guided in all his undertakings by the faithful old high priest, **All the money of the dedicated things,** such as were consecrated to Jehovah by special vow or commandment, **that is brought into the house of the Lord, even the money of every one that passeth the account,** literally, "the money of valuation of a man," that which the priest assessed him upon the completion of a vow, Lev. 27, 2 ff., **the money that every man is set at,** the half-shekel poll-tax, Ex. 30, 13. 15, **and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord,** all the free-will offerings outside of the fixed contributions, Ex. 13, 2. 12. 13; Num. 18, 15—17, v. 5. **let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance,** the people of his own city and district; **and let them repair the breaches of the house,** where the Temple was in need of repairs on account of the ravages of time and through the wilful destruction of Athaliah, 2 Chron. 24, 7, **wheresoever any breach shall be found.** V. 6. **But it was so that in the three and twentieth year of King Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house,** the reason for this strange neglect not being given. Cp. 2 Chron. 24, 5. V. 7. **Then King Jehoash called for Jehoiada, the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house?** The matter having been left to their discretion, the priests had probably used all the money for the needs of the worship. **Now, therefore, receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.** The entire matter had not been carried forward with the energy which its importance demanded, and so new measures were determined upon. V. 8. **And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people,** they would no longer act as collectors and custodians of these contributions, **neither to repair the breaches of the house,** the responsibility for the repairs would no longer rest upon them. It was the usual case of burdening the men in the office of the ministry with business affairs. Cp. Acts 6, 2. V. 9. **But Jehoiada, the priest, took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it,** where the money-contributions of every form could be dropped, **and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord,** on the right side of the entrance to the priests' court, near the altar of burnt offering, cp. 2 Chron. 24, 9. 10; **and the priests that kept the door,** those whose duty consisted in guarding the threshold of the inner court, **put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord.** V. 10. **And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe,** his chief civil secretary, as representing the state in this public affair, **and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags,** binding it up in special receptacles for the purpose, **and told the money that was found in the house of the Lord,** estimating the sum which had been received by weighing the bags. V. 11. **And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work,** the contractors in charge of the repairs, **that had the oversight of the house of the Lord; and they laid it out,** literally, "let it go forth," **to the carpenters and builders that wrought upon the house of the Lord,** v. 12. **and to masons and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.** The fund was used to pay the wages of the different workmen, and to purchase the necessary

building materials. V. 13. **Howbeit, there were not made for the house of the Lord,** namely, while the work of repairing was going on, **bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver,** cp. 1 Kings 7, 50, **of the money that was brought into the house of the Lord;** v. 14. **but they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the Lord.** It was only after all the repair work was finished that gold and silver utensils were procured with the money remaining, 2 Chron. 24, 14. V. 15. **Moreover, they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen,** they demanded no account of funds received and dispensed of the overseers of the building; **for they dealt faithfully,** implicit trust was placed in their integrity. V. 16. **The trespass-money and sin-money was not brought into the house of the Lord; it was the priests';** they lost no revenue on account of the entire arrangement, for the income from these two sources still remained, Num. 5, 8. 9; Lev. 5, 16; 6, 24. Even to-day it is a work well pleasing to God, if Christians serve the Lord with their offerings for the extension of His kingdom at home and abroad. And the leaders of the Church do well in setting the duty of believers before them always, lest the work of the Lord be hindered.

WAR WITH HAZAEL. — V. 17. **Then Hazael, king of Syria,** the same king who had harassed Israel for so many years, **went up and fought against Gath,** the Philistine city which at that time was in the hands of Judah, 2 Chron. 11, 8, cp. 2 Chron. 24, 15—24, **and took it; and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem,** at which time, according to the account in Chronicles, he administered the severe defeat upon the army of Jehoash, who had forsaken Jehovah after the death of Jehoiada. V. 18. **And Jehoash, king of Judah, took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated,** gifts of consecration to Jehovah, **and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the Lord and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael, king of Syria; and he went away from Jerusalem.** The utensils which, according to 2 Chron. 24, 7, Athaliah and her sons had taken from the Temple, and misappropriated to the service of Baal, had no doubt been restored to their original purpose before the occasion mentioned in chap. 11, 18.3) So Jehoash was obliged to buy the immunity of the city of Jerusalem from Hazael in such a shameful manner, all for his denial of the Lord in the last years of his reign. V. 19. **And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 20. **And his servants,** who had not forgotten the tyranny of the king against the sons of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. 24, 25, **arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla,** probably in the castle of the fortress of Jerusalem, where it bounded on the main street of the city. V. 21. **For Jozachar, the son of Shimmeath, and Jehozabad, the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David. And Amaziah, his son, reigned in his stead.** Although Jehoash was buried in the city of David, he was not given the honor of a burial in the tombs of the kings, probably on account of the sins named 2 Chron. 24, 17—22. This story is a solemn warning for such as have been enthusiastic in the service of the Lord, but afterward have fallen into ways of sin. Only he who is faithful to the end will be saved.

3) Cp. Lange and Keil on the passage.

CHAPTER 13.

The Reign of Jehoahaz and Joash of Israel.

JEHOAHAZ KING OF ISRAEL. — V. 1. **In the three and twentieth year of Joash, the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, began to reign over Israel.** The reign of Joash occupied twenty-one full years, the extra months being reckoned, according to Jewish chronology, as full years. **And reigned seventeen years,** or sixteen years and a few months according to the modern exact way of reckoning. V. 2. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and followed,** walked in the way of, **the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.** V. 3. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,** for the continuation of the calf-worship, **and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael, king of Syria,** whose devastating campaigns Elisha had foreseen, chap. 8, 12, **and into the hand of Benhadad, the son of Hazael, all their days,** that is, those of Jehoahaz. V. 4. **And Jehoahaz besought the Lord,** as even unbelievers will in great dangers, **and the Lord hearkened unto him; for He saw the oppression of Israel;** His sympathy was with the people rather than with the king, **because the king of Syria oppressed them.** V. 5. **(And the Lord,** not immediately, but after some years, **gave Israel a savior,** in the person of Joash, but especially in Jeroboam II, **so that they went out from under the**

hand of the Syrians. And the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, safely in their homes, **as beforetime.** V. 6. **Nevertheless,** or although, **they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein; and there remained the grove also in Samaria;** the worship of Asherah, the female idol Astarte, to whom wooden images were erected, did not cease entirely. The Lord showed much patience for the sake of gaining and keeping the people in His worship.) V. 7. **Neither did he,** the king of Syria, v. 4, **leave of the people to Jehoahaz,** of his army, **but fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing,** as the dust which is trodden under foot, an expression which signifies utter defeat and destruction. Such was the situation when Jehovah decided upon His merciful and unmerited course. V. 8. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might,** his military exploits, **are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 9. **And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria. And Joash, his son, reigned in his stead.** The Lord is full of long-suffering and mercy, for He does not desire the death of sinners, but that they should repent and live.

Jehoash King of Israel. — V. 10. **In the thirty and seventh year of Joash, king of Judah, began Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.** V. 11. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin,** the calf-worship was continued as before; **but he walked therein,** he not only tolerated the idolatry connected with this cult, but was guilty of it himself. V. 12. **And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did,** all his works in peace and war, **and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah, king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 13. **And Joash slept with his fathers,** a fact which is here inserted to round off the narrative; **and Jeroboam sat upon his throne; and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.** Some important events of his reign are next related. V. 14. **Now, Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died,** being severely ill for some time. **And Joash, the king of Israel, came down unto him and wept over his face,** for he realized what a loss the death of Elisha would be to the entire nation, **and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!** Elisha, like Elijah, had been a powerful defense of Israel against great and mighty enemies, as the history of the kingdom during the period had shown. V. 15. **And Elisha,** having a last message for the king, **said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.** V. 16. **And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow,** literally, "Let thy hand rest on the bow"; for the left hand rests upon the bow as it is drawn. **And he put his hand upon it. And Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands,** thus signifying that the impulse for the act came from the Lord, that it was performed in the name and by the authority of Jehovah. V. 17. **And he said, Open the window eastward,** that being the direction in which the enemies lived. **And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he,** Elisha, **said,** while the arrow was speeding forward, **The arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria;** the arrow was a symbol of the deliverance which Jehovah would surely give, and it was a pledge of Jehovah against the forces of Syria; **for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou have consumed them,** they would suffer a decisive defeat. V. 18. **And he,** Elisha, said, **Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground,** hitting or shooting to the earth, to indicate that whosoever would be hit by the arrows would be stretched to the ground. **And he smote thrice and stayed,** stopping before the prophet had bidden him to. V. 19. **And the man of God was wroth with him and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it,** till the might of the Syrians had definitely been broken; **whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice,** administer only three defeats to its armies. Jehoash was lacking in that importunity which was and is necessary in asking any gifts from the Lord. V. 20. **And Elisha died,** having reached a good old age, probably eighty years; **and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year,** small bands which made incursions for the sake of plunder, on the order of Bedouin border raids, coming when the season of military campaigning opened. V. 21. **And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they,** who were occupied with this work, **spied a band of men,** whom they took to be some of the raiders; **and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha,** hastily depositing him there since they had no time to dig a grave. **And when the man was let down,** gradually approaching the corpse of Elisha, **and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived,** restored to life by a miracle of God, **and stood up on his feet.** The Lord wanted to remind His people once more that He has absolute

power over death and can recall men to life as He chooses. V. 22. **But Hazael, king of Syria, oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz,** such had been the condition under his reign. V. 23. **And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them,** He regarded and treated them with merciful compassion, **because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast He them from His presence as yet,** His merciful patience was not yet exhausted, the promise of His kindness was still held out to them. V. 24. **So Hazael, king of Syria, died; and Benhadad, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 25. **And Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, took again out of the hand of Benhadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz, his father, by war,** in the campaigns during which he had almost conquered the entire country of Israel. **Three times,** according to the number of times that he shot at the ground, **did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.** Like that of Elisha, the memory of all teachers is a testimony to later generations. Note also: The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. 3, 9.

CHAPTER 14.

Amaziah in Judah, Jeroboam in Israel.

AMAZIAH KING IN JUDAH. — V. 1. **In the second year of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, reigned Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah,** becoming king after the death of his father. V. 2. **He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name,** mentioned for the usual reason, on account of the influence of the queen-mother, **was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.** V. 3. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,** he was devoted to the true worship of Jehovah, **yet not like David, his father,** not with all his heart, not with all the energy of his nature; **he did according to all things as Joash, his father, did,** in his general policy he followed the conduct of his father. V. 4. **Howbeit, the high places were not taken away,** where the people had erected altars in honor of Jehovah; **as yet the people did sacrifice and burn incense on the high places.** V. 5. **And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand,** when his rule was firmly established, **that he slew his servants which had slain the king, his father,** chap. 12, 20. V. 6. **But the children of the murderers he slew not,** although it was the custom in the Orient to put to death also the children of conspirators; **according unto that which is written in the book of the Law of Moses,** Deut. 24, 16, **wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.** In this point, therefore, Amaziah showed himself a faithful king according to the standards of Israel. V. 7. **He slew of Edom,** who had rebelled at the time of Jehoram, chap. 8, 20—22, **in the Valley of Salt,** south of the Dead Sea, **ten thousand, and took Selah,** evidently the capital of the country, later known as Petra, **by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.** Cp. 2 Chron. 25, 6—16. V. 8. **Then Amaziah,** during the last part of his reign, after he had shown symptoms of laxity toward idolatry, **sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.** It was a bold challenge to war, Amaziah probably feeling justified in taking this attitude by the act of Israel's hired army in plundering many cities of Judah, 2 Chron. 25, 13. V. 9. **And Jehoash, the king of Israel, sent to Amaziah, king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife; and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.** The meaning of the parable is clear. Just as far as the briar is below the cedar in excellence, so Joash considered Amaziah to be beneath him in every respect. No wild beast can break down and crush the cedar, but this may very easily happen to the briar. In the same way, calamity was apt to strike the arrogant king of Judah, who trusted in his powerful army and sent challenges where he had no business to do so. V. 10. **Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up,** he was filled with proud arrogance. **Glory of this,** he should be content with the glory which had come to him on account of his overthrow of the Edomites, **and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt,** why risk misfortune by a rash and causeless attack, **that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?** V. 11. **But Amaziah,** still puffed up in his own mind, **would not hear,** he paid no attention to the warning. **Therefore Jehoash, king of Israel, went up,** carrying the campaign into the enemy's country; **and he and Amaziah, king of Judah, looked one another in the face, met in battle, at Beth-shemesh, which be-**

longeth to Judah, on the southern border of the territory of Dan. V. 12. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, suffering a decisive defeat; and they fled every man to their tents. V. 13. And Jehoash, king of Israel, took Amaziah, king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, a captive of war, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim, on the north side, unto the corner gate, toward the northwest, four hundred cubits (about 700 feet). This act marked the city as captured, and as lying open on the side of Israel, whose army might march in at any time. **V. 14. And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house,** all of which had been added to during the reign of Joash, then sent as tribute to Hazael, chap. 12, 18, but now probably again filled up in consequence of the victory over Edom, **and hostages,** from the most important families, the intention being to hold Amaziah in check, **and returned to Samaria. V. 15. Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might,** his political and military deeds, **and how he fought with Amaziah, king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? V. 16. And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam, his son, reigned in his stead.** The repetition of this statement from chap. 13, 13 serves to introduce the remark concerning Amaziah in the next verses. **V. 17. And Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived after the death of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, fifteen years,** never regaining, however, his former prestige. **V. 18. And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? V. 19. Now, they,** chiefly the military party in Judah, **made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish,** a city in the lowlands of Judah, near the border of the Philistines; **but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. V. 20. And they brought him on horses,** on the royal chariot; **and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. V. 21. And all the people of Judah,** adhering to the succession of the house of David, **took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.** Azariah also bore the name Uzziah, Is. 1, 1. **V. 22. He built Elath,** the harbor at the head of the Elanitic Gulf, belonging to the territory of Edom, **and restored it to Judah after that the king slept with his fathers.** It seems that he was coregent with his father for eleven years, reigning fifty-two years after his coronation, or forty-one years after his father's death. The story of Amaziah shows that it is courting misfortune to begin a war without real reason. In spiritual matters the same thing holds true. He who would meet the enemies of the Church trusting in his own powers will probably find himself conquered and in disgrace.

JEROBOAM KING OF ISRAEL. — **V. 23. In the fifteenth year of Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.** He is usually called Jeroboam II, to distinguish him from the first king of Israel. **V. 24. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,** in sanctioning idolatry; **he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. V. 25. He restored the coast of Israel,** established the ancient boundaries, **from the entering of Hamath,** in the extreme north, in the valley of the Orontes, **unto the Sea of the Plain,** the Dead Sea, **according to the word of the Lord God of Israel which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher,** probably the same man who wrote the Book of Jonah. **V. 26. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel that it was very bitter,** chap. 13, 4; **for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel,** as had been foretold Deut. 32, 36. **V. 27. And the Lord said not, He had not yet announced His intention through any prophet, that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, the son of Joash,** their time of grace had not yet fully expired. **V. 28. Now, the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus,** restoring the power of Israel as in the days of its greatest might, **and Hamath, which belonged to Judah,** namely, at the time of David, 2 Sam. 8, 6, **for Israel, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? V. 29. And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah, his son, reigned in his stead,** although not immediately, since for a number of years a state of anarchy seems to have prevailed. God has patience with the sinners, desiring that they return to repentance. He often waits a long while before He pronounces the judgment of condemnation.

CHAPTER 15.

Various Kings of Judah and Israel.

AZARIAH IN JUDAH. — V. 1. **In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, began Azariah, son of Amaziah, king of Judah, to reign,** he at this time became sole regent over Judah. V. 2. **Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign,** when he took up the reins of the kingdom alone, **and he reigned,** all told, **two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.** V. 3. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done,** being devoted through his entire life to the worship of Jehovah, v. 4. **save that the high places were not removed; the people sacrificed and burned incense still on the high places,** against the will of God, although it was done in honor of Jehovah. V. 5. **And the Lord smote the king,** touching him with sickness for overstepping his authority and trespassing upon the function of the priests, 2 Chron. 26, 16—20, **so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house,** apart from other people, since lepers were unclean and excluded from the society of men, Lev. 13, 46. **And Jotham, the king's son, was over the house,** he was regent, **he had charge of the administration, judging the people of the land,** the representative of his father in the most important office in the land. V. 6. **And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** Cp. 2 Chron. 26. V. 7. **So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David,** in the royal tomb; **and Jotham, his son, reigned in his stead.** The happy reign of Azariah, or Uzziah, was an admonition of the Lord to the people of the land, which was to cause them to turn back to the old ways, just as He now sends His blessings to lead men to return to His mercy.

ZACHARIAH AND SHALLUM IN ISRAEL. — V. 8. **In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah, king of Judah,** after an interregnum or a state of anarchy lasting eleven years, **did Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam, reign over Israel in Samaria six months,** the affairs of the nation at that time being in a state of turmoil. V. 9. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done,** there was no change of policy with reference to the calf-worship. **He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,** thus inaugurating this era of idolatry. V. 10. **And Shallum, the son of Jabesh, conspired against him, and smote him before the people,** not in secret, but in public, **and slew him, and reigned in his stead.** V. 11. **And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.** V. 12. **This was the word of the Lord which He spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.** It was in accordance with this promise, chap. 10, 30, that Zachariah, who represented the fourth generation, had at least a short reign before he was assassinated. V. 13. **Shallum, the son of Jabesh, began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria,** enjoying the rule gained by his murder of the king for only a very brief season. V. 14. **For Menahem, the son of Gadi,** who seems to have beeen the commander-in-chief of Israel's army, **went up from Tirzah,** only a few miles from Samaria, where the army was stationed, **and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum, the son of Jabesh, in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead,** usurping the throne by force. V. 15. **And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made,** how he planned to make his conspiracy a success, **behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.** God does not sanction conspiracies and assassinations, but He sometimes makes use of them for the ends He has in mind.

MENAHEM IN ISRAEL. — V. 16. **Then Menahem,** making use of the army to reduce the country to obedience to himself, **smote Tiphsah,** a fortress on the western bank of the Euphrates, which revolted against his rule, **and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah,** the base from which he went out on his campaign; **because they opened not to him,** they refused to receive his officers and to do him homage, **therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up,** a most bestial form of cruelty. V. 17. **In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah, king of Judah, began Menahem, the son of Gadi, to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria,** having established himself on the throne and holding his position by main force. V. 18. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.** V. 19. **And Pul, the king of Assyria,** under whom this country assumed the position of a world monarchy, **came against the land; and Menahem,** not feeling strong enough to repel the invaders, **gave Pul a thousand talents of silver** (almost two million dollars), **that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand,** since a party hos-

tile to Menahem had probably taken the opportunity of Pul's approach to gain followers. When the Assyrians withdrew, Menahem was again in undisputed possession of power. V. 20. **And Menahem exacted the money of Israel,** by simply levying certain assessments, **even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver** (about $32), **to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria,** satisfied with this rich tributary gift, **turned back and stayed not there in the land.** V. 21. **And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?** V. 22. **And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah, his son, reigned in his stead.** The kingdom of Israel was hastening to its dissolution. When backsliders despise both the goodness and the severity of God, then the Lord will at last withdraw His hand and let them hasten to their own condemnation.

Pekahiah and Pekah in Israel. — V. 23. **In the fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah,** probably after some months of anarchistic turmoil, **Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.** V. 24. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,** his idolatry with the calves having persisted through all the history of Israel. V. 25. **But Pekah, the son of Remaliah, a captain of his,** the king's adjutant, **conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house,** the fortified part of his palace, where he had fled at the approach of the conspirators, **with Argob and Arieh,** who, as high officials faithful to Pekahiah, were killed with him, **and with him,** on the side of Pekah, **fifty men of the Gileadites; and he killed him, and reigned in his room.** V. 26. **And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.** V. 27. **In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years,** his accession to the throne following his assassination of the king. V. 28. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,** the constantly recurring phrase serving to draw attention to this continual defection of the ruler and the nation. V. 29. **In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali,** with some of the districts on its boundary, **and carried them captive to Assyria.** This was the beginning of Israel's end. V. 30. **And Hoshea, the son of Elah,** evidently as a result of this Assyrian campaign, **made a conspiracy against Pekah, the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham, the son of Uzziah,** this note taking into account Jotham's viceregency. V. 31. **And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.** It is a source of great comfort that, shortly after the events here recorded, Isaiah prophesied of the light and glory of the Messiah which was to appear to the inhabitants of the devastated districts in Galilee, Is. 9, 1.

Jotham in Judah. — V. 32. **In the second year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, began Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, to reign.** V. 33. **Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign,** that is, when he entered upon the rule alone after the death of his father, **and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.** V. 34. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done,** worshiping Jehovah alone. V. 35. **Howbeit, the high places were not removed; the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher,** that is, the upper, the most northern, **gate of the house of the Lord,** this including both its restoration and its ornamentation. V. 36. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 37. **In those days the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah.** The Syrians, having thrown off the yoke of the Assyrians, were glad to have the Israelite nation as confederates, in order to obtain, if possible, the overlordship of all the countries between the Euphrates and Egypt. V. 38. **And Jotham,** while this misfortune was preparing against Judah, **slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, his father, in the royal tombs; and Ahaz, his son, reigned in his stead.** The object of God's punishment is to lead the sinner to repentance while the time of grace is still at hand. But woe unto every person whom God surrenders to the perversity and obstinacy of his own mind!

CHAPTER 16.

The Wicked Reign of Ahaz in Judah.

AHAZ CALLS UPON ASSYRIA FOR HELP. — V. 1. **In the seventeenth year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah,** the second-last king of Israel, **Ahaz, the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign.** V. 2. **Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, his God, like David, his father;** he forsook the traditional piety of the kings of Judah. V. 3. **But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,** following their idolatrous customs, **yea, and made his son to pass through the fire,** in a form of the terrible human sacrifices in use among the Moabites and the Assyrians, **according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel,** Deut. 12, 31. V. 4. **And he sacrificed and burned incense,** with all the rites observed in true worship, **in the high places and on the hills,** where there was no house of the Lord, but only idolatrous altars, **and under every green tree.** V. 5. **Then Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel,** who had formed an alliance at the time of Jotham, chap. 15, 37, **came up to Jerusalem to war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him;** they were unable to take the city, which had been strongly fortified by Uzziah and Jotham. Thus a prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, Is. 7, 1—9. But while the allies did not accomplish their purpose of taking Jerusalem and embodying Judah in their mighty confederacy, they had success elsewhere. V. 6. **At that time Rezin, king of Syria, recovered Elath,** the important harbor and commercial city at the head of the Elanitic Gulf, **to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath,** thus cutting off one of the chief sources of prosperity of Judah. **And the Syrians came to Elath,** settling there a commercial colony, **and dwelt there unto this day,** until the time this account was written. V. 7. **So Ahaz,** in his great extremity, **sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son,** thereby offering to become a tributary vassal; **come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.** It seems, then, that Ahaz placed no faith in the promises of Isaiah. V. 8. **And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house,** all that had accumulated since Jehoash of Israel had plundered these treasures, chap. 14, 13, **and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria,** thus buying his assistance and entering into a federation against which Isaiah had warned. V. 9. **And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus,** the capital of Syria, **and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir,** leading them into exile to the modern Georgia, south of the Caspian Sea, **and slew Rezin.** Thus the word of the prophet, Amos 1, 3—5, was fulfilled. Subsequent events show that this move did Ahaz no good, for the Assyrian ruler did not regard or treat him as a friend and equal, but as a vassal. He who places his trust in men has, at best, a poor prop for his weakness.

AHAZ PROFANES THE TEMPLE. — V. 10. **And King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria,** to express his appreciation of the assistance which had been rendered him and his people, **and saw an altar that was at Damascus,** which struck his fancy. **And King Ahaz sent to Urijah, the priest, the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof,** he gave a description of its shape, sent a model with the full plans and specifications, including those for the decorations on the altar. V. 11. **And Urijah, the priest,** far from resenting this unwarranted action of the king, **built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus,** an exact counterpart of the heathen altar; **so Urijah, the priest, made it against King Ahaz came from Damascus,** he had it ready at the return of the king. V. 12. **And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar. And the king approached to the altar and offered thereon,** evidently in person and unrebuked by any priest. V. 13. **And he burned his burnt offering and his meat-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings upon the altar,** all this being really a usurpation of rights which did not belong to him, but which he presumed upon in order to express to his own gods his gratitude for his safe return. V. 14. **And he brought also the brazen altar, which was before the Lord,** the altar of burnt offering, **from the forefront of the house, from between the altar,** that is, the new altar, **and the house of the Lord,** the Sanctuary proper, **and put it on the north side of the altar,** in a location of minor importance, so that the new altar was, if anything, superior to the old one. V. 15. **And King Ahaz commanded Urijah, the priest, saying, Upon the great altar,** the new altar, which was now the principal one, **burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat-offering,** the corresponding sacrifice being understood in every case, Ex. 29, 38—42; Num. 28, 3—8; 7, 87; 15, 2—12, **and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat-offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the**

land, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice, the new altar was to be used exclusively for all these purposes. **And the brazen altar shall be for me to enquire by,** concerning this he wanted to find out, he reserved his final decision about this altar for some future time. V. 16. **Thus did Urijah, the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded;** he readily agreed to these unwarranted changes and thus became guilty with the king. V. 17. **And King Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases,** those which held the water receptacles, 1 Kings 7, 27—37, **and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it,** 1 Kings 7, 23—25, **and put it upon a pavement of stones,** on a special foundation of stone, probably a covered platform. All this was probably done to remove everything costly, lest the king of Assyria demand them for himself. V. 18. **And the covert for the Sabbath that they had built in the house,** evidently a covered hall in the court of the Temple, set apart for the king when he visited the Sanctuary, **and the king's entry without,** the ascent to the Temple mentioned 1 Kings 10, 5, **turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria,** all this being done lest the mighty ruler's cupidity be aroused. V. 19. **Now, the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 20. **And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David,** but not in the tombs of the kings, 2 Chron. 28, 27; **and Hezekiah, his son, reigned in his stead.** Woe unto every person who is so carried away with his godlessness that he is beyond warning and restraint! Self-hardening is followed by obduration on the part of God, and the end is everlasting death.

CHAPTER 17.

The Captivity of the Ten Tribes.

The End of Israel as a Nation. — V. 1. **In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, began Hoshea, the son of Elah,** after some eight years of a state bordering on anarchy, **to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.** V. 2. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,** since Jeroboam's calf-worship was not abolished under him, **but not as the kings of Israel that were before him,** he was not their equal in idolatrous practises. V. 3. **Against him came up Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant,** a tributary vassal, **and gave him presents,** rendered the tribute demanded of him. V. 4. **And the king of Assyria,** Shalmaneser, whose general was Sargon, **found conspiracy in Hoshea,** he received evidence of the fact that the king of Israel was secretly planning to overthrow his power; **for he had sent messengers to So,** also called Seveh and Shebek, **king of Egypt,** the only other great power which seemed in a position to cope with Assyria, **and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year,** he had refused to deliver his tribute money and thus revolted against the Assyrian supremacy; **therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison,** this being the end of his reign. V. 5. **Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years,** since it was very strongly fortified. V. 6. **In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel,** what was left of the ten tribes after the campaign of Tiglath-pileser, chap. 15, 29, **away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan,** in Northern Assyria, not far from the Caspian Sea, **and in the cities of the Medes.** It was at this time that the captive king of Israel was taken in chains to Assyria and there put in prison. The reasons for this fearful catastrophe, whereby Israel ceased to exist as a nation, are now given. V. 7. **For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord, their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt,** a fact of which their prophets had reminded them time and again, **and had feared other gods,** this worship of idols being equivalent to a complete rejection of Jehovah, v. 8. **and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel,** accepting all their religious ordinances and customs, **and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.** Instead of abiding faithfully by the ordinances which Jehovah had given, the people observed the new rules, as given them by their kings, without divine authority. V. 9. **And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord, their God,** literally, "covered over, or attached to, Jehovah," things that were not right or proper, either concealing Him by this mass of strange material, or ascribing things to Him with which He had no business, **and they built them high places in all their cities,** namely, for purposes of idolatry, **from the tower of the watchmen,** the lonely buildings erected for the protection of the flocks, **to the fenced city;** the places of their idol wor-

ship were found everywhere. V. 10. **And they set them up images,** statues of Baal, **and groves,** Ashera idols, dedicated to the heathen goddess Astarte, **in every high hill and under every green tree;** v. 11. **and there they burned incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them, and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger;** v. 12. **for they served idols,** logs and masses of stone, **whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing,** Deut. 4, 19. V. 13. **Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah,** in the course of all these many years, **by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the Law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants, the prophets.** They had had both the written Law and the preaching of the prophets to guide them, but they had heeded neither. V. 14. **Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers,** they were stubborn and obstinate, **that did not believe in the Lord, their God.** V. 15. **And they rejected His statutes,** the precepts of the covenant, **and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them,** warning them of the results of their wickedness; **and they followed vanity and became vain,** Rom. 1, 21; for heathenism deals with nothingness, with things that really do not exist, but in the foolish imagination of men, **and went after the heathen that were round about them,** following them in all their idolatry and wickedness, **concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them,** Deut. 12, 30. 31. V. 16. **And they left all the commandments of the Lord, their God, and made them molten images, even two calves,** the ones made by Jeroboam, **and made a grove,** wooden Ashera idols, **and worshiped all the host of heaven,** the sun, the moon, the planets, for traces of this idolatry were found very early, **and served Baal.** V. 17. **And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire,** a particularly horrible offense, **and used divination and enchantments,** Deut. 18, 10, **and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord,** slaves to every form of wickedness, **to provoke Him to anger.** V. 18. **Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah only,** the ten tribes were led away from the country where Jehovah had His dwelling. V. 19. **Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord, their God,** they also became guilty of apostasy, **but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made,** following the idolatrous customs of the northern nation. V. 20. **And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel,** the reference here being to the ten tribes, **and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers,** the heathen nations which made them tributary and plundered them, **until He had cast them out of His sight.** V. 21. **For He rent Israel from the house of David,** for the division of the kingdom of Solomon took place according to God's decree; **and they made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king; and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin,** in establishing idolworship. V. 22. **For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did, they departed not from them,** v. 23. **until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight,** since it persevered in wickedness in spite of all divine warnings, **as He had said by all His servants, the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.** It was the end of the former mighty kingdom. Some parts of the Christian Church to-day resemble the kingdom of Israel before the Exile. The redemption through the blood of Christ is denied, the fundamental facts of God's Word are denied, hypocrisy is lifting its head with ever greater arrogance. But the time will come when all such false Christians will be rejected forever from the face of the Lord.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITANS. — V. 24. **And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sephar-vaim,** colonists from all these cities, districts, and provinces to the north and east, **and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel,** the great majority of whom had been taken away and never saw the land of their birth again; **and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.** V. 25. **And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there that they feared not the Lord,** there was no worship of Jehovah in the land; **therefore the Lord sent lions among them,** which had had a chance to multiply during the time that the country lay waste, **which slew some of them.** V. 26. **Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria,** sending him a special message, **saying, The nations which thou hast removed and placed in the cities of Samaria know not the manner of the God of the land,** for they believed that each country had its own god; **therefore He hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land,** had no idea of the religious customs and worship which He desired. V. 27. **Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence,** one of those addicted to calfworship, **and let them go and dwell there,**

that is, the colonists, who were not to leave the country, **and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.** V. 28. **Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel,** one of the former centers of calf-worship, **and taught them how they should fear the Lord.** It was, indeed, only a very meager and insufficient instruction, because the man himself possessed only an incomplete knowledge of Jehovah. Therefore a strange mixture of religions resulted. V. 29. **Howbeit, every nation made gods of their own,** retaining their old idols, **and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made,** in the old places of worship, **every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt;** since they lived in communities according to the countries from which they came, they retained their ancient worship beside that of Jehovah. The religion of Samaria therefore became a monstrosity, as the further description shows. V. 30. **And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth,** the goddess of victories and also of fertility, **and the men of Cuth made Nergal,** the god of battles, **and the men of Hamath made Ashima,** a very repulsive god under the picture of a goat, v. 31. **and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak,** the former in the shape of a dog, the latter in that of a donkey, **and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim,** idols like the Moloch of the southeastern nations. V. 32. **So they feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them,** from the mass of the people, without regard to Levitical extraction, **priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.** V. 33. **They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.** It was a hybrid religion of the most abominable kind, which has left its impress on the people of that country to this day. V. 34. **Unto this day they do after their former manners; they fear not the Lord,** for it is impossible for true reverence and devotion to exist under such conditions, **neither do they after their statutes or after their ordinances or after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel,** v. 35. **with whom the Lord had made a covenant, and charged them,** in the assembly at Mount Sinai and through Moses, His servant, **saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them;** v. 36. **but the Lord, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched-out arm, Him shall ye fear, and Him shall ye worship, and to Him shall ye do sacrifice,** Deut. 10, 20. V. 37. **And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the Law, and the commandment which He wrote for you ye shall observe to do forevermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.** V. 38. **And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget,** Deut. 4, 23; **neither shall ye fear other gods.** V. 39. **But the Lord, your God, ye shall fear; and He shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.** V. 40. **Howbeit, they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner,** they continued the worship introduced by Jeroboam. V. 41. **So these nations,** the inhabitants of Samaria, **feared the Lord,** they knew of Him and were afraid of Him as a mighty God, **and served their graven images,** to those they gave their faith and worship, **both their children and their children's children; as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.** Although the Samaritans, after the Jewish exile, discontinued the actual gross service of idols, they remain in their blindness and darkness to this day, accepting only the five Books of Moses as the Word of God and rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. They are nearer the true religion than the heathen, but the knowledge which they possess is not the saving knowledge. There is only one way to heaven — through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior.

CHAPTER 18.

The First Part of Hezekiah's Reign.

Hezekiah King over Judah. — V. 1. **Now, it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea, son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign.** The apparent difficulty with regard to the dates at this period is readily solved by remembering that the years of the two kings do not run exactly parallel. "If we assume that Hezekiah's accession took place near the end of Hoshea's third year, then his fourth and sixth years correspond, for the most part, with the sixth and ninth of Hoshea." (Keil.) V. 2. **Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi** (or Abijah, 2 Chron. 29, 1), **the daughter of Zachariah.** V. 3. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David, his father, did.** Instead of patterning after his wicked father, Hezekiah, most likely under the influence of a pious mother, took the example of his illustrious ancestor, the founder of the dynasty, before him. V. 4. **He removed the high**

places, something which even the sincere believers before him had not accomplished, **and brake the images,** the stone statues erected to idols, **and cut down the groves,** the wooden Asherah idols or Astarte columns 1 Kings 14, 23, **and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made,** Num. 21, 5—9, which the people, in the course of the years, had made an object of idolatrous veneration; **for unto those days the children of Israel,** from time to time, as the passion for idolatry took hold of the nation, **did burn incense to it. And he called it Nehushtan,** a contemptuous name, meaning "a piece of brass." This story is a fine illustration of the relic-worship which is still found, especially in the Roman Church. V. 5. **He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.** He was distinguished by a most unusual amount of confidence and firmness of faith. V. 6. **For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him,** never became guilty of idolatry, **but kept His commandments which the Lord commanded Moses.** V. 7. **And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth,** he was fortunate in all his undertakings. **And he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.** The wicked Ahaz placed his kingdom in the power of Assyria; Hezekiah, faithful to Jehovah, declared Judah to be an independent nation. V. 8. **He smote the Philistines,** the ancient enemy of Judah on the west, **even unto Gaza and the borders thereof,** the southernmost of their city-states, **from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city,** the smallest hamlet as well as the most strongly fortified town. When any person, especially, however, a mighty ruler, clings to the Lord with all faithfulness and does not forsake His ways, this is a great mercy of God.

THE ASSYRIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAMARIA AND JERUSALEM. — V. 9. **And it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea, son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Samaria and besieged it.** V. 10. **And at the end of three years they took it; even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, Samaria was taken.** V. 11. **And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes,** v. 12. **because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord, their God, but transgressed His covenant, and all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded, and would not hear them nor do them.** Cp. chap. 17, 5—8. The account is here repeated because the catastrophe which overtook Israel was of great importance to the entire covenant people and probably aided Hezekiah in carrying out his reforms, since the people continually had the warning example of their northern neighbors before them. V. 13. **Now, in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah did Sennacherib, king of Assyria, come up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them,** all the fortified towns outside of Jerusalem, his purpose being to leave behind him conquered territory as he advanced against Egypt. V. 14. **And Hezekiah, King of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish,** a city some fifteen hours southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Egypt, against which Sennacherib (or Sargon, as the inscriptions have his real name) was then encamped, **saying, I have offended,** he acknowledged that he had acted foolishly in not submitting to the invaders. **Return from me; that which thou puttest on me,** namely, in the form of ransom- or tribute-money, **will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, king of Judah, three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold,** a sum which would amount to at least $2,000,000 in modern money. V. 15. **And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house.** V. 16. **At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the Temple of the Lord,** which he himself had put on the door-casings, 2 Chron. 29, 3, **and from the pillars which Hezekiah, king of Judah, had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.** It was a very heavy tribute and drained the resources of Hezekiah. It was a momentary weakness of Hezekiah, which caused him even to enter into negotiations with the enemy; for the Lord was well able to preserve Judah, as the subsequent events showed. The strongest test of faith in God comes on the darkest days; it is then that the heart must cling to Him to the exclusion of everything else.

THE ASSYRIAN EXPEDITION AGAINST JERUSALEM. — V. 17. **And the king of Assyria,** intending to take Jerusalem in spite of the heavy ransom-money which he had received, **sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh,** three of his highest civil and military officers, **from Lachish,** where his advance was still checked, **to King Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem,** they appeared before the city with their army. **And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.** The upper pool, or reservoir, of the city of Jerusalem was that of Gihon, 2 Chron. 32, 30; 1 Kings 1, 33; Is. 7, 3, toward the west. Hezekiah had filled up the surface canal, which, in case of a siege, could easily have been

dammed by the enemies, and had constructed a tunnel which brought the water to a reservoir inside the walls, chap. 20, 20.[4]) So the Assyrian officers stood on an elevation near the western wall of the city. V. 18. **And when they had called to the king,** announcing to the soldiers on the wall that they had a message for Hezekiah, **there came out to them Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household,** the master of the palace, **and Shebna, the scribe,** the secretary of state, **and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder,** the chancellor of the kingdom, three of the king's chief officers. V. 19. **And Rabshakeh,** the spokesman for the Assyrian delegation, **said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria,** the entire message being held in an arrogant and haughty tone, **What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?** V. 20. **Thou sayest,** in a form of idle talking, (**but they are but vain words,** literally, "a mere word of the lips,") **I have counsel and strength for the war.** The mere idea of withstanding the power of the Assyrians was to them the height of foolishness. **Now, on whom dost thou trust that thou rebellest against me?** V. 21. **Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt,** that was the only explanation which the Assyrians could think of, **on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it,** it would give way immediately under even a slight weight. **So is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, unto all that trust on him,** any one depending upon him would do so to his own harm. V. 22. **But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord, our God, is not that He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?** The argument is that God would surely not be with one who had destroyed all the places of worship throughout the country and confined the worship of the people to a single place, but with the Assyrian king, who had taken possession of the country, whose success showed that he was right. V. 23. **Now, therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to,** make a bargain with, **my lord, the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.** It was an expression of supreme contempt: Even if I should furnish you the horses for cavalry, you have not even that many men. V. 24. **How, then, wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants,** Hezekiah's whole army, so they mockingly assert, would not be able to put to flight one of the Assyrian officers commanding the smallest number of soldiers, **and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?** V. 25. **Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it.** It was a bold lie: So far from their being justified in relying upon Jehovah, the Assyrians say, He was rather on their own side, having commissioned them to destroy Jerusalem. The object of this bold speech was, of course, to break down the *morale* of the city's inhabitants, many of whom heard the message. V. 26. **Then said Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language,** which the common soldiers and the people on the wall could not understand; **for we understand it; and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.** V. 27. **But Rabshakeh said unto them,** still with the object of influencing the people, **Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? Hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall,** to cause them to bow in submission, **that they may eat their own dung and drink their own piss with you,** the intimation being that the city would soon reach this point of distress that the inhabitants would eventually resort to their own excrements for food. V. 28. **Then Rabshakeh stood,** deliberately approaching and facing the wall, **and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king,** who has so many tributary vassals, **the king of Assyria:** v. 29. **Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his,** the Assyrian king's, **hand;** v. 30. **neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.** V. 31. **Hearken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present,** literally, "Make with me a blessing," that is, by seeking his favor and a peaceful solution of the difficulty, **and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine and every one of his fig-tree,** an expression denoting the perfect enjoyment of the most ideal conditions of peace which he herewith offered to the people, **and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern,** v. 32. **until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil-olive and of honey,** the description, a mere bit of imagination, being like that of Canaan at its best, Deut. 8, 8; 33, 28, **that ye may live and not die; and hearken not unto Hezekiah when he persuadeth you, saying, The Lord will deliver us.** V. 33. **Hath any of the gods of**

4) Cp. Barton, *Archeology and the Bible*, 377.

the nations, of all the conquered heathen countries, delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? V. 34. **Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?** These were the provinces toward the north and east which had been conquered by the Assyrian forces, chap. 17, 24. **Have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?** V. 35. **Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of mine hand that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?** He means to say, of course, that Jehovah, the God of such an insignificant nation, would not be able to deliver Judah out of the hand of the Assyrian king. All this was intended to intimidate the people and cause them to yield. V. 36. **But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word;** he found none who would have been willing to discuss his proposal; **for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not,** his delegates were merely to report on the contents of the message. V. 37. **Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna, the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent,** their great grief and sorrow being not only on account of the message, but also on account of the insults to the king and the blasphemies of Jehovah which they had heard, **and told him the words of Rabshakeh.** The proud children of this world delight in defying the Word and will of God, in blaspheming the Lord. But those who trust in the Savior will not let such speeches make them waver in their confidence, for the last word will be on the side of the Lord.

CHAPTER 19.

Jerusalem Delivered from the Assyrians.

THE MOURNING OF HEZEKIAH AND THE ARROGANCE OF THE ASSYRIAN KING. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes,** filled with horror over the blasphemy uttered by the Assyrian messengers, **and covered himself with sackcloth,** the garment of penitence, for he saw in the entire Assyrian campaign a punishment of God, **and went into the house of the Lord.** V. 2. **And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna, the scribe,** two of his chief officers, **and the elders of the priests,** the most notable among them, **covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz,** who, although advanced in years, was still proclaiming the Word of the Lord. V. 3. **And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke and blasphemy,** of rejection of the people on the part of God; **for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth,** said of the crisis in the birth of a child when the strength of the mother fails in the midst of the labor pains and the life of both the mother and the baby are in the greatest danger. The situation in Judah was likewise one of extreme peril. V. 4. **It may be the Lord, thy God, will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God,** to heap contempt upon Him; **and will reprove the words which the Lord, thy God, hath heard; wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left,** induce the Lord to revenge the arrogant blasphemy which had been heaped both upon Him and upon His people. V. 5. **So the servants of King Hezekiah,** bearing this message, **came to Isaiah.** V. 6. **And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me;** the word rendered "servants" really signifies "immature boys, lackeys," such as are not yet able to use proper judgment. V. 7. **Behold, I will send a blast upon him,** an extraordinary impetus driving him on, **and he shall hear a rumor,** this disquieting report causing the uneasiness of his mind, **and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.** V. 8. **So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah; for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish,** having meanwhile probably taken the city. V. 9. **And when he,** the Assyrian king, **heard say of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia,** ruler over Egypt, successor of Shebek II, **Behold, he is come out to fight against thee,** to anticipate Sennacherib's attack of Egypt, **he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah,** in a last attempt to obtain possession of Jerusalem and of Judah, **saying,** v. 10. **Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.** The entire message was once more intended to intimidate Hezekiah by a false pretense of power. V. 11. **Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly,** this being a boastful exaggeration; **and shalt thou be delivered?** V. 12. **Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and**

Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? These were provinces north of the Tigris, in Mesopotamia and in the district of Palmyra, in Eastern Syria. V. 13. **Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?** Cp. chap. 18, 34. Over against all the arrogant blasphemy of the unbelievers the children of God have the promise and comfort of the Word of God, in whose power they are able to withstand all enemies.

Hezekiah's Prayer and the Deliverance of Jerusalem. — V. 14. **And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers and read it. And Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.** This is a fine example to follow in case of every difficulty, namely, to lay the matter before the Lord first. V. 15. **And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim,** that being the place where the glory of the Lord appeared to His servants, Ex. 25, 22, **Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth,** not merely of Judah, **Thou hast made heaven and earth.** V. 16. **Lord, bow down Thine ear and hear,** in the attitude of the most careful attention; **open, Lord, Thine eyes and see,** the entire form of the prayer showing the importunity of the request; **and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach,** to heap contempt upon, **the living God.** V. 17. **Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,** v. 18. **and have cast their gods into the fire,** thereby really wiping out the whole nationality of the conquered peoples, which was connected with their gods; **for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone,** Ps. 115, 4; **therefore they had destroyed them.** It was the vanity, the nothingness, of the idols of the heathen which made their overthrow such an easy matter, and which also explains the subjection of the nations worshiping them. But the supposition that Jehovah of Israel is also a god like the idols of the heathen will quickly be shown to be foolish. V. 19. **Now, therefore, O Lord, our God, I beseech Thee, save Thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord God, even Thou only,** and not a vain idol of man's imagination. It is a model prayer of confidence in the Lord and the victory of His cause. V. 20. **Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard.** V. 21. **This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning him.** Now follows a prophecy in poetical form, full of powerful beauty. The first section is a scornful rebuke of Sennacherib's boast. **The virgin, the daughter of Zion,** the entire city with all its inhabitants, all the true believers in Jehovah being meant, **hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee,** in utter mockery and derision. V. 22. **Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed, and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice,** when he lifted it up to utter proud words, **and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel,** whose majesty cannot be outraged with impunity. V. 23. **By thy messengers,** in both delegations, **thou hast reproached the Lord and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar-trees thereof,** the finest specimens, **and the choice fir-trees thereof; and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders and into the forest of his Carmel,** literally, "the forest of his tree-garden," said of the thick forest of cedars near the highest points of the Lebanon. V. 24. **I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged,** fortified, places. This was setting forth the measureless boast of the Assyrian with the proper scorn, for he not only prided himself on the fact that he had overrun the entire Lebanon district, subdued Phenicia, Galilee, and Samaria, but he also asserted, with great boldness, that he would, in overcoming the power of Egypt, dig cisterns in the wilderness, and command the very Nile to dry up before him. This arrogant self-assumption is now properly rebuked. V. 25. **Hast thou not heard long ago how I,** Jehovah, **have done it,** that it was in reality God who had planned and executed these decrees upon the nations, the Assyrian king being but a small instrument in His hand, **and of ancient times that I have formed it?** If the arrogant boaster had never heard it, then it was time now that he knew the Lord to be the one who had fashioned and determined it. **Now have I brought it to pass that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.** Without this will and permission of God the Assyrian could have accomplished nothing; he was, without knowing it, carrying out the plan of the Lord. V. 26. **Therefore,** because the Lord had so decreed it, **their inhabitants were of small power,** unable to offer a successful resistance; **they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field and as the green herb,** tender and easily scorched, **as the grass on the housetops,** which withers quickly on account of lack of soil, **and as corn blasted before it be grown up,** having the germ of decay in it before it has fairly begun to grow. V. 27. **But**

I know thy abode, his quiet resting, **and thy going out and thy coming in**, all the activity of the ordinary person, **and thy rage against Me.** V. 28. **Because thy rage against Me and thy tumult is come up into Mine ears**, the arrogant security of which he boasted, **therefore I will put My hook in thy nose**, as is done in taming wild animals, **and My bridle in thy lips**, as in managing spirited horses, **and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest**, without having reached his object. After this rebuke of the enemy, the Lord, through His prophet, encouraged Hezekiah and Judah. V. 29. **And this shall be a sign unto thee**, namely, Hezekiah, **Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves**, the volunteer grain growing from kernels lost during harvest, **and in the second year that which springeth of the same**, the fruit-bearing stalks of grain growing up after harvest; **and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof**, the country by that time having been restored to perfect peace, so that the farmer could do his work in security. V. 30. **And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah**, those of Jerusalem and elsewhere who had escaped the destructive hand of the Assyrians, **shall yet again take root downward and bear fruit upward**, be firmly established in the land. V. 31. **For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion**, this being the capital and center of the Old Testament Church. **The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.** There is a Messianic thought underlying the prophet's words, of the deliverance of the daughter of Zion, of those chosen by the Lord, to be kept by His power throughout eternity. The Lord now pronounces His decree in the crisis which was upon Judah-Jerusalem. V. 32. **Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield**, not make an attack upon it in closed formation, with the shields held out for protection, **nor cast a bank**, dig trenches and erect bulwarks, **against it.** The four statements form a climax showing the utter futility of Sennacherib's hopes. V. 33. **By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord.** V. 34. **For I will defend this city, to save it, for Mine own sake**, to uphold His honor against the blasphemy of the Assyrian, **and for My servant David's sake**, on account of the promise made to him, 1 Kings 11, 13. V. 35. **And it came to pass that night**, the very same night after Isaiah had pronounced these words, **that the angel of the Lord went out**, in this case an angel of vengeance, a destroyer, **and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand**, this being an extraordinary destruction and not to be explained by merely natural causes. **And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses**, it was a ghastly sight which the comparatively small number of survivors beheld. V. 36. **So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed, and went, and returned**, the heaping of similar terms indicating the haste of his departure, **and dwelt at Nineveh**, his capital city. V. 37. **And it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch, his god**, the chief Assyrian divinity, shown in human form with double wings and an eagle's head, **that Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, smote him with the sword**, as the Lord had foretold, v. 7; **and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon, his son, reigned in his stead.** Thus all the enemies of the Lord will find all their plans frustrated and themselves the victims of a terrible destruction.

CHAPTER 20.

The Last Part of Hezekiah's Reign.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS. — V. 1. **In those days**, some time during the latter part of his reign, after he had ruled fourteen years, **was Hezekiah sick unto death.** He was then thirty-nine years old and in the prime of his life. **And the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, came to him and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order**, literally, "Command regarding thy house"; he was to take the steps ordinarily taken by a person expecting to die with reference to the disposal of his property and the management of his affairs; **for thou shalt die, and not live**, his illness was mortal unless some supernatural agency intervened. V. 2. **Then he turned his face to the wall**, in order to commune with the Lord without interference and disturbance, **and prayed unto the Lord, saying**, v. 3. **I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before Thee**, in his entire life and actions, **in truth and with a perfect heart**, his worship of Jehovah had been without hypocrisy, and he had earnestly opposed every form of idolatry, **and have done that which is good in Thy sight.** To die in the prime of life was to the believing Jews an indication of God's special displeasure. Cp. Prov. 10, 27. **And Hezekiah wept sore**, deeply moved by this apparent sign of God's displeasure. V. 4. **And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone**

out into the middle court, he had not yet left the middle city, Mount Zion, where the royal palace was situated, **that the word of the Lord came to him, saying,** v. 5. **Turn again and tell Hezekiah, the captain of My people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David, thy father,** to whom Hezekiah had clung with such firmness all his life, **I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears,** both of which pleaded for an extension of life. **Behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord,** his health and strength being miraculously restored to him as in the case of the New Testament healings. V. 6. **And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria,** who had started on his expedition against Jerusalem in this year, chap. 18, 13; **and I will defend this city for Mine own sake and for My servant David's sake,** chap. 19, 34. V. 7. **And Isaiah,** having returned to the palace according to the command of the Lord, **said, Take a lump,** a pressed mass, **of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil,** the inflammation, ulcer, or carbuncle, which caused all the trouble; **and he recovered,** he revived immediately, the Lord gave him life and health. V. 8. **And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?** This question was probably asked before Isaiah called for the pressed figs, when he had announced to the king that he would recover. Hezekiah was so anxious that he wanted an external sign to strengthen his faith in the prophet's words. V. 9. **And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that He hath spoken: shall the shadow,** namely, on the shadow-measurer, or sun-dial, where the length of the shadow was a means of telling the time, **go forward ten degrees or go back ten degrees?** V. 10. **And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees,** if it would merely advance ten steps, this would not seem so very extraordinary; **nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees,** returning through the space which it had already traversed. If we suppose the sun-dial to have consisted of a column surrounded with circular steps, the shadow at noon striking the highest step in the center, and in the morning and evening the lowest step on either side, we have some idea of how it worked. V. 11. **And Isaiah, the prophet, cried unto the Lord; and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.** The miracle consisted either in a supernatural breaking of the light rays that struck the dial, or, more probably, in the fact that the sun actually returned degrees, as Isaiah has it, chap. 38, 8. Our God is the almighty Lord of the universe, having not only the laws of nature, but also the power over life and death, in His hand. And no matter what God does, it serves, in the final analysis, for the welfare of His children.

HEZEKIAH'S VANITY. — V. 12. **At that time Berodach-baladan** (or Merodach-baladan), **the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,** the first king of Babylon, then still under Assyrian supremacy, mentioned in sacred history, **sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah; for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.** This was after the return of the Assyrian army, and the object of the embassy was not merely to congratulate Hezekiah upon his recovery, but also to enter into friendly negotiations with a nation which had withstood the Assyrian power, 2 Chron. 32, 31. V. 13. **And Hezekiah,** flattered by this show of interest on the part of a great power, **hearkened unto them,** rejoicing on account of them and of the prospect of becoming allied with the mighty Babylonian nation, **and showed them all the house of his precious things,** used first of all for the storing of rare and costly spices and then for treasures of every kind, **the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment,** fine balsam-oil, manufactured from the products of the royal gardens, **and all the house of his armor,** in the house of the forest of Lebanon, 1 Kings 7, 2, **and all that was found in his treasures; there was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah showed them not.** The presence of such rich treasures in Jerusalem is not surprising, for Hezekiah had not stripped the country bare in sending gifts to Sennacherib; besides, he may have gotten rich presents after the withdrawal of the Assyrian army. V. 14. **Then came Isaiah, the prophet, unto King Hezekiah and said unto him, What said these men, and from whence came they unto thee?** These questions were preparatory to calling the king to account, both for yielding to vanity and for entertaining the thought of entering into an alliance with Babylon. **And Hezekiah,** not realizing that he was on a wrong path, **said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.** V. 15. **And he,** Isaiah, **said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah,** still not realizing that his heart was caught in vanity, **answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.** V. 16. **And Isaiah,** in reproving the king for this show of weakness, **said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord.** V. 17. **Behold, the days come that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day,** in the form of treasures of every kind, **shall be carried into Babylon; noth-**

ing shall be left, saith the Lord. The sin of vanity was to be punished by the taking away of the goods of which the king's heart was proud. V. 18. **And of thy sons,** descendants in general, **that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs,** footmen, attendants, **in the palace of the king of Babylon,** reduced to a position of great humiliation, Dan. 1, 3. V. 19. **Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah,** submitting meekly to the decree of the Lord, **Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.** He accepted the reproof. **And he said,** as though to himself, **Is it not good if peace and truth be in my days?** He acknowledged the justice, the faithfulness, and the grace of Jehovah, although it was painful to him to know that the future would bring such evils, on account of which he did not wish to survive or see their execution. V. 20. **And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made a pool and a conduit, and brought water into the city,** the aqueduct which he constructed at the approach of the Assyrian army in order to insure drinking-water to the city in case of a prolonged siege, 2 Chron. 32, 30, **are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 21. **And Hezekiah slept with his fathers; and Manasseh, his son, reigned in his stead.** Hezekiah died in the faith and was given the testimony that he was a king after the heart of God. Blessed is he who, having departed from the way of strict probity, permits himself to be reproved by the Lord and returns to the ways which please the Master.

CHAPTER 21.

The Reign of Manasseh and of Amon.

MANASSEH'S REIGN. — V. 1. **Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign,** having been born three years after his father's severe illness, **and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.** V. 2. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.** It seems that the wicked priests and false prophets had formed a party and insinuated themselves into the favor of the young king, who was hardly more than a boy, persuading him to carry out their designs. V. 3. **For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had destroyed,** chap. 18, 4. the places of worship which had always been in use contrary to the Lord's wish; **and he reared up altars for Baal,** the chief idol of the Canaanite nations, **and made a grove,** an Asherah statue consecrated to the female idol Astarte, **as did Ahab, king of Israel,** distinguished for his idolatry, 1 Kings 16, 32. 33; **and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them,** this being the star- or planet-worship of the Assyrians. V. 4. **And he built altars, devoted to idolatry, in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put My name,** He wanted only His worship in the city which He had chosen, and in the Temple dedicated to His name. V. 5. **And he built altars for all the host of heaven,** in the service of his star-worship, **in the two courts of the house of the Lord,** namely, in the court of the priests and in that of the people. V. 6. **And he made his son pass through the fire,** a custom observed by various heathen nations, **and observed times,** professing to uncover the future by interpreting various signs in nature, **and used enchantments,** another form of foretelling the future by certain signs connected with sacrifices, **and dealt with familiar spirits,** such as professed to have the spirit of prophecy, **and wizards,** prudent, cunning men, augurs, men versed in all the secret magic of the East. **He wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger.** V. 7. **And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made,** an Asherah idol, **in the house,** in the very Sanctuary, **of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put My name forever,** 2 Sam. 7, 13; v. 8. **neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the Law that My servant Moses commanded them,** this being the condition which the Lord always added to His promise. The Temple of the Lord was thus utterly desecrated by Manasseh, and the worship of Jehovah, if still practised at all, became a farce. V. 9. **But they hearkened not,** namely, to the warning condition of Jehovah. **And Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel,** they exceeded all these nations in idolatrous wickedness. V. 10. **And the Lord spake by His servants, the prophets,** especially by Hosea, Nahum, Micah, Amos, and Isaiah, **saying,** v. 11. **Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did,** this name standing for all the nations of Canaan, **which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols,** v. 12. **therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Is-**

rael, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, the entire southern nation, which included the small tribe of Benjamin and the remnant of Simeon, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle, ring with the sharp pain caused by the news of the harsh and horrible punishment planned by the Lord. V. 13. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, the reference being to a custom by which people standing in line were measured and a certain percentage slain, 2 Sam. 8, 2, the idea of complete annihilation being apparently included here. And I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down, letting not even a drop remain, making a clean sweep of everything, this signifying the complete overthrow and destruction of Jerusalem with all its inhabitants. V. 14. And I will forsake the remnant of Mine inheritance, abandoning and throwing away also the remaining southern tribes, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies, cp. Is. 42, 22, v. 15. because they have done that which was evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt even unto this day, the entire historical account being filled with the complaints and admonitions of the Lord regarding the disobedience of the people. V. 16. Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, slaying those who opposed his godlessness, Jewish tradition stating that Isaiah was put to death by being sawed asunder, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, the introduction of idolatry in its worst form, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. It is related, 2 Chron. 33, 11—17, that Manasseh was carried away by the Assyrians and repented of his sins, whereupon he tried to undo the harm which he had wrought, with only little success, however, so far as the people on the whole were concerned. V. 17. Now, the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? V. 18. And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza, so called from the former owner of this summer-home or pleasure-house; and Amon, his son, reigned in his stead. Manasseh is an example of warning to all believers; for there is no greater punishment than that which will strike such as deliberately discard better knowledge and turn to sins of every kind. It is best not to take chances with the mercy of the Lord, for we do not know when His time of grace will expire.

Amon's Reign. — V. 19. Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jothbah, a city in Judah. V. 20. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh did, namely, during the greater part of his reign. V. 21. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, not only those of Canaan and Phenicia, but also of Assyria and Chaldea, and worshiped them. V. 22. And he forsook the Lord God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the Lord. V. 23. And the servants of Amon, evidently his attendants, since it was a conspiracy in the palace only, conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. V. 24. And the people of the land, the inhabitants of Judah, slew all them that had conspired against King Amon, evidently with the intention of placing a man from their midst on the throne; and the people of the land made Josiah, his son, king in his stead. V. 25. Now, the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? V. 26. And he was buried in his sepulcher in the garden of Uzza, his resting-place being next to that of his father; and Josiah, his son, reigned in his stead. The example of evil is always powerful, more so than the example of good. All the more is it necessary for us to resist evil in every form and not to allow it to gain the ascendency.

CHAPTER 22.

The Finding of the Book of the Law under Josiah.

Josiah's Good Reign. — V. 1. Josiah was eight years old, his father having died at the age of twenty-four, when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath, a town in the Plain of Judah. It was doubtless due to the influence of his God-fearing mother that Josiah was trained to observe the ways of the Lord. V. 2. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David, his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; he clung to all the precepts of the Lord with unwavering firmness. V. 3. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of King Josiah that the king sent Shaphan, the son of Aza-

liah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, the secretary of state, who was in charge of the finances, to the house of the Lord, saying, v. 4. Go up to Hilkiah, the high priest, that he may sum the silver, get it ready for payment by having the priests in charge place it in sacks and weigh it, which is brought into the house of the Lord, the old rule of the payment of funds into the Temple treasury still holding good, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people; v. 5. and let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord, the overseers and contractors in charge of the various repairs which the king contemplated; and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the Lord, to repair the breaches of the house, the inspectors taking care of the workmen's pay, v. 6. unto carpenters and builders and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. Cp. chap. 12, 11—16. Since the Temple had not been repaired for more than two centuries, the idea of the king was very timely. V. 7. Howbeit, there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand because they dealt faithfully; trustworthy men being in charge of the money, no special accounting was demanded. V. 8. And Hilkiah, the high priest, who knew of the king's plan and had undertaken to bring order into the Sanctuary, said unto Shaphan, the scribe, I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord. The existence of this book, apparently the copy made by Moses, had been known, but it had been lost sight of for a while; in other words, Hilkiah had come across it almost by accident as he was straightening up in the Sanctuary. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. V. 9. And Shaphan, the scribe, came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, the priests in charge had poured out the money from the large chest into small sacks, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord. It was a special grace of God that this sacred book, the authentic copy, was discovered, for it helped the king in his campaign for the restoration of the pure worship, even more than the manuscript copies which were ordinarily in use. It was a special act of God's grace that the Reformation restored the Bible to us in all its purity, teaching us the way of salvation aright.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW READ BEFORE THE KING, AND THE RESULTS. — V. 10. And Shaphan, the scribe, showed the king, he made a report to him, saying, Hilkiah, the priest, hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king, not the entire roll at this time, but certain passages. V. 11. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the Book of the Law, the original, as usual, making a much deeper impression upon the hearer than the copies which were often neglected, that he rent his clothes, his entire soul being stirred by the impressive ordinances and filled with sorrow as he realized his shortcomings. V. 12. And the king commanded Hilkiah, the priest, and Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Achbor, the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan, the scribe, and Asahiah, a servant of the king's, one of his officers, saying, v. 13. Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah, the entire nation, concerning the words of this book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, as he could see from such passages as Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. The inquiry thus chiefly had the purpose of finding out whether there were still hope for grace, whether the threatened punishments might still be averted. V. 14. So Hilkiah, the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah went unto Huldah, the prophetess, who at that time was the only one in the city possessing the gift of prophecy, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe, either of the priestly vestments in the Temple or of the royal garments for state occasions; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college, in the second district of the lower city, which was afterward included within the walls;) and they communed with her. V. 15. And she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, the first part of the message being of a general nature, v. 16. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, Jerusalem as the capital of the nation, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read, the curses upon disobedience would surely be fulfilled, v. 17. because they have forsaken Me, and have burned incense unto other gods, indulged in gross and shameless idolatry, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands, with the idol statues which they had made. Therefore My wrath shall be kindled against this place and shall not be quenched, the punishment was sure to come. V. 18. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, in a special message concerning his rule alone, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard, v. 19. because thine heart was tender, not hardened in obstinacy and sin as that of some of his prede-

cessors, **and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord,** appealing to Him in repentance and humility, **when thou heardest what I spake against this place and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me,** in terror, dismay, and repentance, **I also have heard thee, saith the Lord,** namely, his appeal for mercy. V. 20. **Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace,** without seeing the desolation of Jerusalem, although he himself was killed in battle, chap. 23, 29; **and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place,** he would not witness its destruction with all its attendant horrors. **And they brought the king word again,** they reported to him what they had heard from the prophetess. Those who truly humble themselves under the Word of God will escape the judgment which will strike the disobedient and wilful malefactors.

CHAPTER 23.

The Pure Worship Restored. Judah Conquered by Egypt.

The Covenant Renewed. — V. 1. **And the king sent,** solicitous of the welfare of all his people, **and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem,** as representatives of the nation. V. 2. **And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, in a great assembly of the people, and the priests, and the prophets,** the word here probably referring to all those whose duty it was to preach and explain the Law in public, **and all the people, both small and great,** the lower classes as well as the people of distinction and wealth; **and he read in their ears all the words of the Book of the Covenant which was found in the house of the Lord,** the covenant to which the nation had been pledged by Moses. V. 3. **And the king stood by a pillar,** probably a raised dais or platform, **and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord,** in obeying Him and doing His will, **and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes,** the precepts of the covenant as well as the more general obligations toward God and the neighbor, **with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book,** he vowed or pledged the allegiance of all the people, of the entire nation. **And all the people stood to the covenant,** declaring their willingness to abide by its provisions. V. 4. **And the king commanded Hilkiah, the high priest, and the priests of the second order,** those ordinarily having charge of the sacrifices, **and the keepers of the door,** the Levites whose duty it was to guard the Temple, **to bring forth out of the Temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal and for the grove,** for the Asherah statues, **and for all the host of heaven,** whatever apparatus and equipment in altars and vessels consecrated to idolatry was found there; **and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron,** as material under the Lord's curse, **and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel,** an act which rendered that ancient place of idolatry unclean in the eyes of all worshipers. V. 5. **And he put down the idolatrous priests,** he put a stop to their pernicious activities, **whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah,** for to that extent idolatry had been sanctioned under Manasseh and Amon, **and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, the twelve constellations of the zodiac, and to all the host of heaven,** for the idolatry practised in those days was a strange mixture of Canaanitish and Chaldean worship. V. 6. **And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord,** the Asherah-statues installed by Manasseh, **without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron,** which flowed between the city and the Mount of Olives, **and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it,** the burned metal, small to powder, **and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people,** the cemeteries of the common people, in order to dishonor still more the ashes of the destroyed idols. V. 7. **And he brake down the houses of the sodomites,** the male prostitutes, **that were by the house of the Lord, where the women,** those who were associated with these lewd practises, **wove hangings for the grove,** tent-cloth as coverings for the Asherah idols. V. 8. **And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah,** where they were engaged in local worship, **and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba,** on the northern boundary of Judah, **to Beersheba,** on its extreme southern boundary, **and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city,** that which was near Millo, the citadel of Jerusalem, **which were,** or, that also which was, **on a man's left hand at the gate of the city,** this second altar and place of worship being near a gate where many foreigners passed in and out, the object probably being

to afford these people an opportunity to worship their own gods. V. 9. **Nevertheless, the priests of the high places, who had partaken in worship forbidden by the Lord, came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem,** they were not permitted to officiate in the pure worship of Jehovah, **but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren,** they, like the priests disabled by reason of some bodily disfigurement, Lev. 21, 17—22, were given a part of the gifts brought for the sacrifices. V. 10. **And he,** Josiah, **defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom,** south of the city, where children had been sacrificed to Moloch, Is. 30, 33, **that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.** V. 11. **And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun,** those kept in the Temple for the use of the cult of the sun, **at the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech, the chamberlain,** the eunuch charged with the care of these horses, **which was in the suburbs,** in the colonnade, or flight, of cells which served for the keeping of various materials used in the Temple worship, **and burned the chariots of the sun,** which were used in solemn processions in honor of the sun, **with fire.** V. 12. **And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz,** on the roof of the royal palace, as they had been restored by Manasseh and Amon, **which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord,** all devoted to idolatry, chap. 21, 5, **did the king beat down,** giving orders to remove them with all haste, probably by dumping them into the valley of the Kidron, **and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them,** as they were burned at the foot of the precipice, **into the brook Kidron.** V. 13. **And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the Mount of Corruption,** the southern summit of the Mount of Olives, also known as the Mount of Offenses, **which Solomon, the king of Israel, had builded for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Zidonians,** the goddess whose worship was connected with gross immoral practises, **and for Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.** V. 14. **And he brake in pieces the images,** the stone statues of the idols, **and cut down the groves,** the wooden pillars dedicated to Asherah-Astarte, **and filled their places with the bones of men,** thus defiling the very places where they had stood. V. 15. **Moreover, the altar that was at Bethel,** within the former boundaries of Israel, now near the southern border of Samaria, **and the high place which Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down,** destroying the entire place of worship, **and burned the high place,** evidently a house built on this elevation, **and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove,** the Asherah idol, which had taken the place of the calf or had been erected in addition to that. V. 16. **And as Josiah turned himself,** looking about for further abominations, **he spied the sepulchers that were there in the mount,** the neighborhood having been used as a burial-place, **and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchers, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it,** for the contact with human bones and their ashes defiled it, **according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed who proclaimed these words,** telling Jeroboam the very name of the man who would overthrow the place of his idolatry, 1 Kings 13, 2. V. 17. **Then he said, What title is that that I see?** He referred to the gravestone, or monument, of a sepulcher in the neighborhood. **And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulcher of the man of God which came from Judah and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel,** one of the most remarkable prophecies of the entire Old Testament. V. 18. **And he,** Josiah, **said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones;** his bones were not to be used in defiling the sanctuary of idolatry. **So they let his bones alone,** they saved them from the general defilement, **with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria,** 1 Kings 13, 11. V. 19. **And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria,** all the shrines erected for idolatrous purposes, **which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel,** he destroyed and defiled them all. V. 20. **And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there,** heathen priests who had established themselves in the country, **upon the altars,** which thus became their places of execution, **and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.** Although militant methods of this kind are no longer permitted by the Lord, the spirit which prompted them is still needed. It is the duty of every Christian congregation to put away all offenses out of its midst, not to tolerate ungodliness or worldliness in any form. The conservative reformation of Luther and his coworkers shows us in what manner we ought to proceed.

THE PASSOVER KEPT. —V. 21. **And the king,** probably in the early years of his reformatory labors, **commanded all the people, saying, Keep the Passover unto the Lord, your**

God, as it is written in the book of this covenant, Ex. 12, 3; Lev. 23, 5; Num. 9, 2; Deut. 16, 2. This command was carried out, as we read 2 Chron. 35, 1—19. V. 22. **Surely there was not holden such a Passover from the days of the Judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah,** v. 23. **but in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, wherein this Passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem.** In point of attendance, in point of strict adherence to the precepts of the Law, this was the most extraordinary festival of its kind ever held. V. 24. **Moreover, the workers with familiar spirits, the necromancers, and the wizards, and the images,** the household gods, to whom magical power was imputed, **and the idols,** small gods, which also were used chiefly in the households, **and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away,** he put an end to all the superstitious practises and idol-worship which were carried on in private houses, **that he might perform the words of the Law which were written in the book that Hilkiah, the priest, found in the house of the Lord.** He wanted to see all the precepts of the Lord in actual operation throughout the land. V. 25. **And like unto him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses,** which he intended to enforce with all severity; **neither after him arose there any like him,** he stood alone in this respect. V. 26. **Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal.** The offense given by Manasseh had been so great and the consequences of his many transgressions so deep-rooted that even this reformation with all its outward show of success was unable to stem the tide of God's indignation. V. 27. **And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there,** 1 Kings 8, 29. V. 28. **Now, the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** Cp. 2 Chron. 35. V. 29. **In his days Pharaoh-nechoh, king of Egypt, went up against the king of Assyria, to the river Euphrates,** this being probably Nabopolassar, who was ruler of both Babylon and Assyria. **And King Josiah went against him, to prevent him from marching through his country; and he,** the Egyptian king, **slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him,** they met in battle at this city, in the Plain of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Carmel. V. 30. **And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulcher.** Thus the attempt of Josiah to avert misfortune from his country met with disaster, he died in the defense of his position. Thus the just are mercifully taken away before misfortune breaks upon them, finding peace in the tomb until the great day of resurrection. **And the people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.**

THE REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ AND OF JEHOIAKIM. V. 31. **Jehoahaz,** whom the people of the country had anointed king in preference to his brother Eliakim, **was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.** Before his accession to the throne he had borne the name Shallum, Jer. 22, 11. V. 32. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,** a wicked son of a God-fearing father, **according to all that his fathers had done,** especially Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon. V. 33. **And Pharaoh-nechoh,** who had at that time gained the ascendency over Judah, **put him in bands,** took him captive, **at Riblah, in the land of Hamath,** as he apparently continued his campaign against the eastern king, **that he might not reign in Jerusalem,** for Pharaoh was not satisfied with the people's choice of king, being glad to get Jehoahaz into his power; **and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold** (a total of some $22,000), this payment being exacted in order to emphasize his supremacy. V. 34. **And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim, the son of Josiah, the heir apparent, king in the room of Josiah, his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away. And he came to Egypt and died there,** nothing more being known about his age or the length of his captivity. V. 35. **And Jehoiakim,** completely dependent upon Pharaoh, **gave the silver and the gold,** which had been demanded as tribute, **to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation,** agreeing with his assessment, **to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.** V. 36. **Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah,** a town in

the neighborhood of Shechem. V. 37. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.** Jeremiah speaks of him as a conscienceless, grasping prince, eager to gain riches and power at the expense of his unlucky subjects, Jer. 22, 13—19. The way was being prepared for God's judgment of anger upon the people which had rejected Him. Even so the coming of the great Day of Judgment is being heralded by the signs which the Lord Jesus bade us observe, Matt. 24.

CHAPTER 24.

Nebuchadnezzar Oppresses Judah.

THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM. — V. 1. **In his days,** in the fifth or sixth year of his reign, **Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,** came up, after he had inflicted a decisive defeat on the Egyptian forces at Carchemish, on the Euphrates, Jer. 46, 2, **and Jehoiakim,** after the surrender of Jerusalem, **became his servant,** his tributary vassal, **three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.** V. 2. **And the Lord sent against him,** as a punishment for his sins, **bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon,** not in an organized army at first, but in companies of raiders; for all these nations, while recognizing Nebuchadnezzar's supremacy, took the opportunity of gratifying their own hate against Judah, **and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord which He spake by His servants, the prophets,** chap. 20, 17; 21, 12—14; 23, 27. V. 3. **Surely at the commandment of the Lord,** because God so willed it, as is here once more stated for the sake of emphasis, **came this upon Judah to remove them out of His sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did,** his wickedness having polluted the entire nation, v. 4. **and also for the innocent blood that he shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon,** chap. 21, 16. V. 5. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** V. 6. **So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers,** Jer. 22, 19; 36, 30; **and Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 7. **And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land,** after the decisive defeat on the Euphrates; **for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt,** all the countries which had become tributary to Egypt. The corruptions of these last days of the world are similar to those preceding the first destruction of Jerusalem, and so the Judgment must be near.

THE REIGN OF JEHOIACHIN. — V. 8. **Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.** His name is also given as Jeconiah, 1 Chron. 3, 16; Jer. 24, 1, and as Coniah, Jer. 22, 24. 28. **And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem,** Elnathan having been one of the chief officers at court, Jer. 26, 22; 36, 12. 25. V. 9. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done.** V. 10. **At that time,** in the spring of the year, when military operations were opened, **the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged,** his officers being in general charge of the siege. V. 11. **And Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against the city,** taking personal charge of the campaign as the fall of the city seemed imminent, **and his servants did besiege it.** V. 12. **And Jehoiachin, the king of Judah,** realizing the uselessness of further resistance, **went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers,** all the most influential men of the nation; **and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign,** he dethroned him, made him captive. V. 13. **And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house,** whatever money and gifts had been deposited there in about the last decade, **and cut in pieces,** rather, tore loose from their fastenings, **all the vessels of gold which Solomon, king of Israel, had made in the Temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said,** Jer. 20, 5. V. 14. **And he carried away all Jerusalem,** all the most representative citizens, **and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths,** such as might provide the people of Judah with weapons; **none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land,** such as would not be dangerous to his rule. V. 15. **And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives,** for he also had a harem according to Oriental style, **and his officers, and the mighty of the land; those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon,** their number being some two thousand. V. 16. **And all the men of might,** the able-bodied men, those fit for military duty, **even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon, to**

the country in which his capital was situated, where they were colonized, Jer. 29. Any corruption of morals usually proceeds from the leaders of a nation, and therefore the Lord's punishment strikes these first. God is righteous in all His judgments and rewards every one according to his deeds.

ZEDEKIAH BEGINS HIS RULE. — V. 17. **And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, his father's brother,** a third son of Josiah, **king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah** ("the righteousness of Jehovah," he by whom Jehovah executes justice). V. 18. **Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.** Cp. chap. 23, 31. V. 19. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done,** thus fulfilling Judah's measure of iniquity. V. 20. **For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until He had cast them out from His presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.** The final execution of the Lord's judgment took place in his reign, the rebellion which took place in the seventh or eighth year of Zedekiah's reign being merely the occasion which brought on the catastrophe. If all efforts to gain the hearts by admonition and reproof prove futile, the Lord at last delivers men into the judgment which their sin deserves.

CHAPTER 25.

Destruction of Jerusalem. The Exile.

JUDAH CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY. — V. 1. **And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month,** when Zedekiah had rebelled against the Babylonian supremacy, **that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came, he and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it,** encamped round about it; **and they built forts against it round about,** bulwarks with watch-towers, such as were used in besieging a city. Although Nebuchadnezzar was not present in person, or at least did not remain, yet he directed all the operations, carrying them forward with all energy. V. 2. **And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah,** for the walls and fortifications of the city were very strong. V. 3. **And on the ninth day of the fourth month,** after almost a year and a half, **the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land,** the common people were in such sore straits on account of the severity of the famine that they resorted to the most horrible means of sustaining life, Lam. 2, 11—19; 4, 3—10; Ezek. 5, 10; Jer. 37, 21. V. 4. **And the city was broken up,** the breach being made on the north side of the outer wall, Jer. 39, 3—5, **and all the men of war,** the soldiers who were defending the city, **fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls,** the outer and the inner wall, **which is by the king's garden,** in the lower part of the city, for they believed that escape to the south might still be possible; **(now the Chaldees were against the city round about,** although their lines may not have been so strong on this side;) **and the king went the way toward the plain,** Jer. 39, 4, the meadows of the Jordan near Jericho. V. 5. **And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, for the king's** intention evidently was to escape beyond the river into the desert country; **and all his army were scattered from him.** Cp. Ezek. 12, 3—16. V. 6. **So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon, to Riblah,** a city in a fruitful plain in the north, where the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar had been established; **and they gave judgment upon him,** namely, a tribunal appointed by the king, since Zedekiah had broken his oath of allegiance and revolted. V. 7. **And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes,** for they were guilty with their father and might have continued the dynasty, **and put out the eyes of Zedekiah,** they blinded him, probably by passing a heated metal rod over his open eyes, **and bound him with fetters of brass,** doubly fettered hand and foot, **and carried him to Babylon.** Thus Zedekiah was maimed for life and had to give up all hope of ever being able to rule again. V. 8. **And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon,** one of his chief officers and most trusted officials, **unto Jerusalem;** v. 9. **and he burned the house of the Lord,** the wonderful Temple of Solomon, whose upper structure was all of wood, **and the king's house,** the beautiful royal palace, **and all the houses of Jerusalem,** all the palaces of the rich, **and every great man's house burned he with fire,** thus completing the taking of the city, and leaving houses only for the poor people of the land. V. 10. **And all the army of the Chaldees that were with the captain of the guard, placed under his command for this purpose, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about,** the fortifications which had rendered the city almost impregnable. V. 11. **Now, the rest of the people that were left in the city,** the few who had escaped the

ravages of the sword and of famine, **and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon,** those who had deserted to the enemy during the siege, **with the remnant of the multitude,** probably the remaining able-bodied men who might have been able to bear arms, **did Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, carry away.** V. 12. **But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land,** those without landed possessions, **to be vine-dressers and husbandmen,** they received orders to cultivate the vineyards and fields, lest the country revert to its wild state. V. 13. **And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord,** the two conspicuous hollow columns, 1 Kings 7, 15, **and the bases,** 1 Kings 7, 22, of which Ahaz had removed the borders, chap. 16, 17, **and the brazen sea that was in the house of the Lord,** resting on a stone base since the oxen had been removed, **did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.** V. 14. **And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered,** those used in the service of the altar of burnt offering in the court, **took they away.** Cp. Ex. 27, 3; 1 Kings 7, 45—50. V. 15. **And the fire-pans, and the bowls,** 1 Kings 7, 50, **and such things as were of gold,** the appointments used in the Sanctuary proper, **in gold, and of silver, in silver,** including all vessels made of precious metals, **the captain of the guard took away.** V. 16. **The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord, the brass of all these vessels was without weight;** its amount was so great that it was useless to attempt to weigh it, 1 Kings 7, 47. V. 17. **The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapiter,** the capital, **upon it was brass, and the height of the chapiter three cubits,** or five cubits over all, 1 Kings 7, 16; 2 Chron. 3, 15; Jer. 52, 22; **and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapiter round about, all of brass,** this artistic work making the columns very costly; **and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.** Cp. Jer. 52, 17—22. V. 18. **And the captain of the guard took Seraiah, the chief priest, and Zephaniah, the second priest,** one of those ordinarily engaged in the work of sacrifice, but evidently a person of importance, **and the three keepers at the door,** the chief officers of the Temple guard, one of whom was stationed at each of the three main entrances, cp. Jer. 38, 14. V. 19. **And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war,** the commander of the city, **and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city,** of the king's intimate counselors, **and the principal scribe of the host,** an officer in the direct service of the commander-in-chief, **which mustered the people of the land,** enrolling them for military service, these seven representing the civil population, **and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city,** either the leaders in the rebellion or such as had distinguished themselves in the defense of the city; v. 20. **and Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon, to Riblah,** where Nebuchadnezzar was still encamped. V. 21. **And the king of Babylon smote them,** for participating in the rebellion, **and slew them at Riblah, in the land of Hamath,** the Syrian province in the extreme northern part of Palestine. **So Judah was carried away out of their land.** This was the beginning of the great captivity, wherewith the ancient glory of Judah faded away, for it never again regained its position of independence and power. The destruction of Jerusalem is a type of the last great Judgment which will come upon the world.

GEDALIAH GOVERNOR OF JUDAH.—V. 22. **And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had left, even over them he made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.** Ahikam had been a man of importance under Josiah and had once, in siding with Jeremiah, saved the latter's life, Jer. 26, 24. Evidently Gedaliah had followed in his father's footsteps in siding with the prophet against the policy of Zedekiah, and therefore Nebuchadnezzar now elevated him to this position of trust and placed Jeremiah in his care, Jer. 39,14; 40, 6. V. 23. **And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men,** those who had been dispersed and scattered during the flight of the king and had been in hiding ever since, **heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor,** his own representative in the conquered province, **there came to Gedaliah, to Mizpah,** the ancient fortified city a few miles northwest of Jerusalem, where he had established his headquarters, **even Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan, the son of Careah, and Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth, the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah, the son of a Maachathite,** all of these being members of the nobility and men of influence, **they and their men.** V. 24. **And Gedaliah sware to them and to their men,** in order to reassure them and make them willing to acknowledge the supremacy of the king of Babylon, **and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees,** to yield to the new order of things **and submit willingly. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.** To do so would be not merely submitting to the inevitable, but would accord with the policy which the Lord advised through Jeremiah. V. 25. **But it came to pass in the seventh month,** only two months after the destruction of Jerusalem, **that Ishmael, the**

son of Nethaniah, the grandson of the secretary of state under King Jehoiakim, Jer. 36, 12. 20, **the son of Elishama, of the seed royal**, a descendant of the royal house, by virtue of which fact he thought he had a claim to the position of governor, **came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.** This was possible because Gedaliah refused to heed the warning which he received, and because Ishmael was further incited to this murder by Baalis, king of the Ammonites. The story is told in greater detail by Jeremiah, Jer. 41. V. 26. **And all the people, both small and great, whether powerful and influential or not, and the captains of the armies arose, and,** after stopping for a while near Bethlehem, **came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldees.** Cp. Jer. 42 and 43. V. 27. **And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month,** the date being noted with great accuracy on account of the significance of the event, **that Evil-merodach**, son of Nebuchadnezzar, **king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign,** when he came to be king, **did lift up the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, out of prison,** releasing him from his captivity with its despair and misery, Gen. 40, 13. 20; v. 28. **and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon,** holding him in higher estimation, giving him the preference and a higher rank than the others; v. 29. **and changed his prison garments,** Jehoiachin appeared in the royal garments befitting his rank; **and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life,** he partook of the king's bounty, receiving an allowance enabling him to have attendants. V. 30. **And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king,** a regular income upon which he could depend, **a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.** This incident was a favorable sign to the captive Jews, reminding them of the fact that the Lord intended to terminate their captivity, if they would but acknowledge their sins and turn to Him in true repentance. It looked forward to the still more glorious day when the Lord would send the promised Messiah.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

INTRODUCTION.

Like the Books of Samuel and the Books of the Kings, the Books of the Chronicles were originally written as one volume, bearing a name in the Hebrew which signifies "Words of Days," a name which may be freely translated as "History." The English title is taken from the name suggested by Jerome, who prepared the first Latin translation of the Bible which came into general use in the Church.

The Books of the Chronicles contain a section of Jewish history, selected for a certain purpose and written from a definite point of view. By choosing certain phases and emphasizing certain traits in the general history and in particular biographies, especially all such factors as pertained to the establishment and maintenance of the true worship, the author intended to inspire the Jews who had just returned from the Babylonian exile with zeal for the will of Jehovah. He pictures the blessings which followed a loyal adherence to the covenant and the punishment of its rejection. This purpose explains the choice of material, the rhetorical form, which is observable in various sections, and the continual emphasis upon the religious side in the life of the kings.

The Books of the Chronicles may be divided into the following parts: 1. Genealogical tables from the earliest times to the end of the exile, together with historical notes and geographical lists, 1 Chron. 1—10; 2. the history of David, 1 Chron. 11—30; 3. the history of Solomon, 2 Chron. 1—9; 4. the history of the kingdom of Judah down to the Babylonian captivity, 2 Chron. 10—36.

The Second Book of the Chronicles closes with the statement that King Cyrus of Persia issued a written proclamation throughout all his kingdom, permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem, 2 Chron. 36, 22. 23. He made this proclamation in the first year of his reign, which was about 536 B. C. Accordingly, these books must have been written after this date, after the return of the Jews. On the other hand, the work must not be dated much later, for the author speaks of darics, Persian gold coins bearing on one side the image of Darius, and the Jews used these Persian coins only while under Persian rule. From the similarity of the last two verses in Chronicles and of the first two in Ezra, it has been concluded that the pious and learned scribe Ezra himself, who was endowed with the spirit of prophecy, is the author, and this must be assumed as having every show of probability.[1]

1) Cp. Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 35—38; *Concordia Bible Class*, March, 1919, 45—47.

CHAPTER 1.

Genealogical Table from Adam to Edom.

From Adam to the Sons of Keturah. — V. 1. **Adam, Sheth, Enosh,** the members of the families in the direct order of succession only being mentioned, v. 2. **Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered,** v. 3. **Henoch,** who was taken up into heaven by the Lord, **Methuselah,** the man who reached the highest age recorded in history, **Lamech,** v. 4. **Noah,** with whom the list of the antediluvian patriarchs is brought to an end, **Shem, Ham, and Japheth,** all three sons of Noah being mentioned as the founders of the world after the Flood. V. 5. **The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.** V. 6. **And the sons of Gomer: Ashchenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.** V. 7. **And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.** The seven sons and seven grandsons of Japheth were the founders of strong nations. Cp. Gen. 10, 2—5. V. 8. **The sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.** V. 9. **And the sons of Cush: Sevah, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.** V. 10. **And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be mighty upon the earth,** the first ruler of a world empire. V. 11. **And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,** v. 12. **and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (of whom came the Philistines,) and Caphthorim.** These two were brother nations. V. 13. **And Canaan begat Zidon, his firstborn, and Heth,** v. 14. **the Jebusite also, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite,** v. 15. **and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,** v. 16. **and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite,** all these nations being established afterwards to the southeast and east of the Mediterranean Sea. Cp. Gen. 10, 6—20. V. 17. **The sons of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech** (or Mash), the last four being sons of Aram and grandsons of Shem. These nations were found principally on the Arabian Peninsula and in the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris. V. 18. **And Arphaxad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber.** V. 19. **And unto Eber were born two sons; the name of the one was Peleg** (division), **because in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.** V. 20. **And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazar-maveth, and Jerah,** v. 21. **Hadoram also, and Uzal, and Diklah,** v. 22. **and Ebal** (or Obal), **and Abimael, and Sheba,** v. 23. **and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.** The nations were found from Asia Minor eastward to India. Cp. Gen. 10, 21—31. V. 24. Here follows Shem's line to Abraham: **Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah,** v. 25. **Eber, Peleg, Reu,** v. 26. **Serug, Nahor, Terah,** v. 27. **Abram; the same is Abraham,** the Lord Himself having changed his name, Gen. 17, 5. V. 28. **The sons of Abraham: Isaac,** the son of promise and bearer of the Messianic prophecy, **and Ishmael.** V. 29. **These are their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,** v. 30. **Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema,** v. 31. **Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael,** Gen. 25, 12—16. These names are perpetuated in the clans and tribes of the Arabs to the present day, a witness of the fulfilment of God's promises. He is true and faithful and will not let His words fall to the ground.

The Descendants of Esau and the Dukes of Edom. — V. 32. **Now, the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine,** the half-brothers of Ishmael; **she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah,** these being the founders of nomadic tribes in the northern part of Arabia and in Syria. Cp. Gen. 25, 1. 2; Gen. 36, 35; Job 2, 11. **And the sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan.** V. 33. **And the sons of Midian: Ephah, and Epher, and Henoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these are the sons,** the descendants, **of Keturah.** V. 34. **And Abraham begat Isaac,** this verse continuing the enumeration of verse 28. **The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel.** V. 35. **The sons of Esau,** who forfeited his birthright and was not the bearer of the Messianic promise: **Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.** Cp. Gen. 36, 9—14. V. 36. **The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek.** V. 37. **The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.** V. 38. **And the sons of Seir: Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezar, and Dishan.** V. 39. **And the sons of Lotan: Hori, and Homan** (or Heman); **and Timna was Lotan's sister.** V. 40. **The sons of Shobal: Alian** (or Alvan), **and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah.** V. 41. **The sons of Anah: Dishon. And the sons of Dishon: Amram** (or Hemdan), **and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.** V. 42. **The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, and Zavan, and Jakan** (or Akan). **The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.** Cp. Gen. 36, 20—28. These men were founders of nomadic tribes occupying the country between the Red Sea and the Euphrates, some of the mightiest ones being found near the boundary of Chaldea. V. 43. **Now, these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela, the son of Beor;**

and the name of his city was Dinhabah. This has been identified with O'Daeb, a well-known town in the center of Al Dahna, a great northern desert in the direction of Chaldea and the Euphrates. V. 44. **And when Bela was dead, Jobab, the son of Zerah, of Bozrah reigned in his stead.** V. 45. **And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead.** V. 46. **And when Husham was dead, Hadad, the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Avith.** V. 47. **And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.** V. 48. **And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.** V. 49. **And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan, the son of Achbor, reigned in his stead.** V. 50. **And when Baal-hanan was dead, Hadad** (or Hadar) **reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Pai; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.** It appears from this that the country had no definite capital at this time, and that the royal power was not hereditary. Probably the ruler was elected from the total number of princes or most influential sheiks. V. 51. **Hadad died also,** and after his death the office of king seems to have been abolished. **And the dukes of Edom were: Duke Timnah, Duke Aliah, Duke Jetheth,** v. 52. **Duke Aholibamah, Duke Elah, Duke Pinon,** v. 53. **Duke Kenaz, Duke Teman, Duke Mibzar,** v. 54. **Duke Magdiel, Duke Iram. These are the dukes of Edom.** For the entire passage compare Gen. 36, 31—39. 51—54. This list has only geographical importance, as naming the chief Edomite principalities. It has been preserved to show how completely the Lord fulfilled His promise concerning Esau.

CHAPTER 2.

The Generations from Israel to David.

From Israel to Jesse. — V. 1. **These are the sons of Israel,** that is, of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the bearer of the Messianic promise: **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun,** the six sons of Leah, v. 2. **Dan,** the older son of Rachel's maid, **Joseph and Benjamin,** the two sons of Rachel, **Naphtali, Gad, and Asher,** the remaining sons of the handmaids. V. 3. **The sons of Judah,** who became the bearer of the Messianic promise, Gen. 49, 10; **Er, and Onan, and Shelah, which three were born unto him of the daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess. And Er, the first-born of Judah, was evil in the sight of the Lord; and He slew him,** Gen. 38, 7. V. 4. **And Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bare him Pharez and Zerah,** Gen. 38, 29. 30. **All the sons of Judah were five.** V. 5. **The sons of Pharez: Hezron and Hamul.** V. 6. **And the sons of Zerah,** also known as Ezra, 1 Kings 4, 31: **Zimri** (or Zabdi), **and Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara** (or Darda, **five of them in all.** The entire family was known for the wisdom of its members, and for their skill in poetry and music, whence they were even called the sons of Mahol, that is, of musical lore. V. 7. **And the sons of Carmi: Achar** (or Achan), **the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed,** Josh. 6, 18; 7, 1. V. 8. **And the sons of Ethan: Azariah.** V. 9. **The sons also of Hezron that were born unto him: Jerahmeel, and Ram** (or Aram), **and Chelubai** (or Caleb). V. 10. **And Ram begat Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah,** Num. 1, 7; v. 11. **and Nahshon begat Salma** (or Salmon), **and Salma begat Boaz,** v. 12. **and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse.** Cp. Ruth 4, 18—22. V. 13. **And Jesse begat his first-born, Eliab; and Abinadab, the second; and Shimma** (or Shammah), **the third;** v. 14. **Nethaneel, the fourth; Raddai, the fifth;** v. 15. **Ozem, the sixth; David, the seventh,** only seven sons being mentioned here instead of the eight of 1 Sam. 16, 10; 17, 12, because one of the younger sons seems to have died before reaching maturity and leaving children; v. 16. **whose sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah,** the nephews of David: **Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three.** V. 17. **And Abigail bare Amasa; and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmeelite,** 2 Sam. 17, 25. Thus the family of David was shown to go back directly to Judah, a fact which sets forth his importance in the Messianic story.

The Genealogy of Caleb. — V. 18. **And Caleb, the son of Hezron,** v. 9, **begat children of Azubah, his wife, and of Jerioth,** who seems to have been a secondary wife, whose children were reckoned as those of Azubah; **her sons are these: Jesher, and Shobab, and Ardon.** V. 19. **And when Azubah,** his rightful spouse, **was dead, Caleb took unto him Ephrath, which bare him Hur.** V. 20. **And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat Bezaleel.** V. 21. **And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead,** grandson of Joseph and chief of that city east of Jordan, with its adjacent territory, **whom he married when he was threescore years old; and she bare him Segub.** V. 22. **And Segub begat Jair,** who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead, Num. 32, 41; Deut. 3, 14; Josh. 13, 30;

1 Kings 4, 13. On his father's side Jair belonged to the tribe of Judah, but on the side of his mother he was rightly called a son of Manasseh. V. 23. **And he took Geshur and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them,** from the heathen inhabitants, Num. 32, 39—41, **with Kenath and the towns thereof, even threescore cities. All these belonged to the sons of Machir, the father of Gilead,** Deut. 3, 14; Josh. 13, 30. V. 24. **And after that Hezron was dead in Caleb-ephratah,** probably the same as was afterward called Bethlehem-ephratah, **then Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him Ashur, the father of Tekoa,** a posthumous son, chief of this little town south of Bethlehem, later the home of Amos, the prophet. V. 25. **And the sons of Jerahmeel, the first-born of Hezron, were Ram, the first-born, and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, and Ahijah.** V. 26. **Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.** V. 27. **And the sons of Ram, the first-born of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker.** V. 28. **And the sons of Onam were Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur.** V. 29. **And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail, and she bare him Ahban and Molid.** V. 30. **And the sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim; but Seled died without children.** V. 31. **And the sons of Appaim: Ishi. And the sons of Ishi: Sheshan. And the children of Sheshan,** the name of only one daughter being mentioned, since his sons were evidently not living at his death and had no issue: **Ahlai.** V. 32. **And the sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai: Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died without children.** V. 33. **And the sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.** This traces the genealogy in one branch of the family. V. 34. **Now Sheshan,** the son of Ishi, v. 31. **had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha.** V. 35. **And Sheshan gave his daughter,** very likely the Ahlai named in v. 31. **to Jarha, his servant,** who doubtless had embraced the Jewish faith and was now adopted into the tribe of Judah, **to wife; and she bare him Attai.** V. 36. **And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat Zabad,** v. 37. **and Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat Obed,** v. 38. **and Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat Azariah,** v. 39. **and Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat Eleasah,** v. 40. **and Eleasah begat Sisamai, and Sisamai begat Shallum,** v. 41. **and Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begat Elishama.** V. 42. **Now the sons of Caleb,** the brother of Jerahmeel, those of his third wife, **were Mesha, his first-born, which was the father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah, the father of Hebron.** V. 43. **And the sons of Hebron: Korah, and Tappuah, and Rekem, and Shema.** V. 44. **And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkoam; and Rekem begat Shammai.** V. 45. **And the son of Shammai was Maon; and Maon was the father of Beth-zur.** Maon founded a city named after him, and then founded the colony of Beth-zur. V. 46. **And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Mozah, and Gazez; and Haran begat Gazez.** The last sentence is either a fuller explanation of the foregoing words, or indicates that son and grandson bore the same name. V. 47. **And the sons of Jahdai: Regem, and Jotham, and Gesham, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph.** V. 48. **Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber and Tirhanah.** V. 49. **She bare also Shaaph, the father of Madmannah, Sheva, the father of Machbenah, and the father of Gibea. And the daughter of Caleb was Achsa,** Josh. 15, 17. V. 50. **These were the sons of Caleb,** who himself was a son of Hezron, v. 18, **the son of Hur, the first-born of Ephratah: Shobal, the father of Kirjath-jearim;** he founded this old Gibeonite town, formerly the heathen Baalah, in the northwest corner of Judah; v. 51. **Salma, the father,** the founder or chief, **of Bethlehem; Hareph, the father of Beth-gader,** formerly known as Geder, Josh. 12, 13. V. 52. **And Shobal, the father of Kirjath-jearim, had sons: Haroeh** (or Reaiah) **and half of the Manahethites,** his descendants making up half of the inhabitants of the town Manahath, near the border of Judah, toward Dan. V. 53. **And the families of Kirjath-jearim: the Ithrites, and the Puhites, and the Shumathites, and the Mishraites,** four leading families of that territory; **of them came the Zareathites and the Eshtaulites.** V. 54. **The sons of Salma: Bethlehem, and the Netophathites,** the people of Netophah, near Bethlehem, **Ataroth, the house of Joab,** another town, whose location, however, is unknown, **and half of the Manahethites,** the other half, cp. v. 52, **the Zorites,** of the border city of Zorah. V. 55. **And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez,** either church or state officers belonging to the Kenite clan: **the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites,** these words describing the functions of the three classes of scribes, all connected with divine worship, chiefly the liturgical part. **These are the Kenites that came of Hemath,** people settling in Judah and thereby distinguished from the Kenite clan in Manasseh, **the father of the house of Rechab,** for the Rechabites were well known among the Jews. So wonderfully did the Lord bless the posterity of Caleb on account of his faithful stand for Jehovah in the wilderness, when ten of the spies filled the hearts of the people with fear, Num. 14, 24.

CHAPTER 3.

The Descendants of David.

From David to the Exile. — V. 1. **Now, these were the sons of David which were born unto him in Hebron,** after his accession to the throne, but before the conquest of Jerusalem: **the first-born, Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess,** who, therefore, aspired to the throne; **the second, Daniel** (or Chileab, 2 Sam. 3, 3), **of Abigail the Carmelitess;** v. 2. **the third, Absalom, the son of Maachah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith;** v. 3. **the fifth, Shephatiah, of Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah, his wife,** whom we have no reason to identify with Michal, as many commentators do, since it is expressly stated that Michal had no child, at least from David, till the day of her death, 2 Sam. 6, 23. For the whole passage compare 2 Sam. 3, 2—5. V. 4. **These six were born unto him in Hebron,** and, in the natural order of things, would have been heirs to the throne in that order; **and there he reigned seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years,** 2 Sam. 5, 5. V. 5. **And these were born unto him in Jerusalem: Shimea** (or Shammua), **and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four; of Bathshua** (or Bathsheba), **the daughter of Ammiel,** called Eliam 2 Sam. 11, 3; v. 6. **Ibhar also, and Elishama** (or Elishua), **and Eliphelet,** v. 7. **and Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia,** v. 8. **and Elishama, and Eliada** (or Beeliada), **and Eliphelet, nine.** Cp. 2 Sam. 5, 14—16. V. 9. **These were all the sons of David, beside the sons of the concubines, and Tamar, their sister,** the full sister of Absalom, against whom Amnon sinned so grievously, 2 Sam. 13, 1. V. 10. **And Solomon's son was Rehoboam** (the men named from here on being the princes who succeeded their fathers on the throne of Judah, except toward the end of the seventeen successive reigns in the same dynasty), **Abia** (or Abijam), **his son; Asa, his son; Jehoshaphat, his son;** v. 11. **Joram, his son; Ahaziah** (or Azariah, or Jehoahaz), **his son; Joash, his son;** v. 12. **Amaziah, his son; Azariah** (or Uzziah), **his son; Jotham, his son;** v. 13. **Ahaz, his son; Hezekiah, his son; Manasseh, his son;** v. 14. **Amon, his son; Josiah, his son.** V. 15. **And the sons of Josiah,** after whose death the disintegration of the kingdom set in in earnest, **were: the first-born, Johanan** (or Jehoahaz), who reigned only three months; **the second, Jehoiakim,** invested with the royal power by Pharaoh-nechoh; **the third, Zedekiah,** whose original name was Mattaniah; **the fourth, Shallum.** V. 16. **And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah** (or Jehoiachin, or Coniah), **his son; Zedekiah, his son.** Thus the Lord, by virtue of His promise to David and as a reward for his piety, kept his lineal descendants on the throne of Judah during all these years, a token of the fulfilment of the greater promise, the sending of the Messiah.

From Jeconiah to Anani. — V. 17. **And the sons of Jeconiah,** whom Evil-merodach elevated from his position of dishonor, 2 Kings 25, 27—30; **Assir,** the captive, the word modifying Jeconiah, **Salathiel** (or Sealthiel), **his son,** v. 18. **Malchiram also, and Pedaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.** V. 19. **And the sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith, their sister;** v. 20. **and Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five.** V. 21. **And the sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jesaiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shechaniah;** v. 22. **and the sons of Shechaniah: Shemaiah; and the sons of Shemaiah: Hatush, and Igeal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six.** V. 23. **And the sons of Neariah: Elioenai, and Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three.** V. 24. **And the sons of Elioenai were Hodaiah, and Eliashib and Pelaiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Delaiah, and Anani, seven.** Although this list offers various difficulties, some of which we are not able to solve in the absence of further authentic records, it is clear that the family of David was continued through the exile, and the great number of Zerubbabel's sons at once suggests that one of these was the ancestor of the line from which Mary and therefore Jesus sprang, according to the genealogical lists in Matt. 1 and Luke 3.

CHAPTER 4.

The Descendants of Judah and Simeon.

The Posterity of Judah. — V. 1. **The sons,** the principal descendants, **of Judah, in a** direct descending line: **Pharez, Hezron, and Carmi** (or Chelubai, or Caleb), **and Hur, and Shobal.** Cp. chap. 2, 3—5. 18. 20. 50. V. 2. **And Reaiah** (or Haroeh), **the son of Shobal,** to whom the genealogical table had progressed in chap. 2, 52, **begat Jahath; and Jahath begat Ahumai and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites,** those inhabiting the town of Zorah, chap. 2, 50—53. V. 3. **And these were of the father of Etam: Jezreel,** probably the founder of that mountain city in

Judah, and Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazelel-poni; v. 4. and Penuel, the father of Gedor, who also founded a town of his name in the tribe of Judah, Josh. 15, 58, and Ezer, the father of Hushah, founded by him some time after the conquest. These are the sons of Hur, the first-born of Ephratah, the father of Bethlehem. V. 5. And Ashur, the father, that is, the founder, of Tekoa, chap. 2, 24, had two wives, Helah and Naarah. V. 6. And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and Hepher, from whom the district Hepher in the southern part of Judah probably received its name, 1 Kings 4, 10, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. V. 7. And the sons of Helah, named here in the second place, although first above, were Zereth, and Jezoar, and Ethnan. V. 8. And Coz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel, the son of Harum, the reason for this reference to the Levitical family at this point being unknown, chap. 24, 10. V. 9. And Jabez, whose city is mentioned chap. 2, 55, was more honorable than his brethren, distinguished for his sincere and fervent piety as well as for his learning; and his mother called his name Jabez ("son of sorrow"), saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. V. 10. And Jabez, uttering his prayer in the form of a vow as he was entering upon some important service, called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, extending his boundaries, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, literally, "put me from evil," that it may not grieve me, literally, "that I may have no more sorrow! The rhetorical form of the sentence is a vow promising allegiance to the true God. And God granted him that which he requested, answering his prayer and prospering his endeavor, as He does in the case of all prayers made according to His will. V. 11. And Chelub, the brother of Shuah, thereby distinguished from the more illustrious Caleb, begat Mehir, which was the father of Eshton. V. 12. And Eshton begat Beth-rapha, and Paseah, and Tehinnah, the father of Irnahash, or the city of Nahash, from which Abigail, the stepsister of David, hailed, 2 Sam. 17, 25. These are the men of Rechah. V. 13. And the sons of Kenaz, the grandfather of Caleb, whose name was preserved in the family name Kenezite: Othniel, Josh. 15, 17, and Seraiah; and the sons of Othniel: Hathath. V. 14. And Meonothai begat Ophrah; and Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the valley of Charashim; for they were craftsmen, carpenters living in a well-known community, as men of the same occupation occupy certain quarters of the Oriental cities to this day. V. 15. And the sons of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, such as were not mentioned in the other lists: Iru, Elah, and Naam; and the sons of Elah, even Kenaz, who was given the name of his illustrious ancestor. V. 16. And the sons of Jehaleleel, a man otherwise not mentioned: Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel. V. 17. And the sons of Ezra, who probably lived in Egypt or at the time of the exodus, were Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon; and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah, the father of Eshtemoa, a town of some note south of Hebron. V. 18. And his wife Jehudijah, she being the Jewish wife of Mered, bare Jered, the father of Gedor, and Heber, the father of Socho, a city in the lowlands southwest of Jerusalem, and Jekuthiel, the father of Zanoah, another town in Judah, probably near Zorah. And these are the sons of Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took, namely, the Miriam, or Merom, Shammai, and Ishbah mentioned above. So this was a case in which a descendant of Caleb married an Egyptian princess who had become a convert to the Jewish religion. V. 19. And the sons of his wife Hodiah, or of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite. V. 20. And the sons of Shimon were Amnon, and Rinnah, Benhanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi were Zoheth and Ben-zoheth. These men are otherwise unknown. V. 21. The sons of Shelah, the son of Judah, were Er, the father of Lecah, and Laadah, the father of Mareshah, these two towns being located in the extreme southern part of Judah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, the manufacture of fine linen goods being a hereditary art in this family, from the time of the Egyptian sojourn, of the house of Ashbea, v. 22. and Jokim, and the men of Chozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab, having conquered the country, at least in part, at a very early date, and Jashubi-lehem. And these are ancient things, very ancient accounts brought to the notice of the readers in this connection. V. 23. These were the potters, the reference being to all the children and descendants of Shelah, and those that dwell among plants and hedges, probably the gardeners of the royal gardens near Jerusalem and Bethlehem; there they dwelt with the king for his work, another indication that certain trades remained in the same family from one generation to the next. It seems that the old adage of being a master of one trade and not a jack of many has good Scriptural foundation.

The Family of Simeon. — V. 24. The sons of Simeon, who were classed together with those of Judah, because they had their possessions within the boundaries of Judah, were Nemuel (or Jemuel), and Jamin, Jareb, Ze-

rah, and Shaul; v. 25. Shallum, his son; Mibsam, his son; Mishma, his son. V. 26. And the sons of Mishma: Hamuel, his son; Zacchur, his son; Shimei, his son. V. 27. And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, his large family being brought out very prominently; but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply like to the children of Judah. This fact, which in those days was looked upon as a special visitation of the Lord, hindered the Simeonites from becoming a large and powerful tribe, Num. 1, 22; 26, 14. Cp. Jacob's curse, Gen. 49, 7. V. 28. And they dwelt at Beersheba, and Moladah, and Hazar-shual, v. 29. and at Bilhah (or Balah), and at Ezem, and at Tolad, v. 30. and at Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at Ziklag, v. 31. and at Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susim, and at Beth-birei, and at Shaaraim, these being the towns allotted to their tribe in the distribution of the land. These were their cities unto the reign of David, who, because the Simeonites had been too cowardly to drive the heathen from some of the towns allotted to them, took these cities from the hands of their enemies and gave them to his own tribe of Judah. V. 32. And their villages were Etam (or Ether), and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities; v. 33. and all their villages that were round about the same cities, unto Baal. These were their habitations and their genealogy; according to these cities they were entered into their genealogical lists. V. 34. And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah, the son of Amaziah, v. 35. and Joel, and Jehu, the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, v. 36. and Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Adiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah, v. 37. and Ziza, the son of Shiphi, of the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah. V. 38. These mentioned by their names, thirteen leaders and heads of families, were princes in their families; and the house of their fathers increased greatly, in numbers and strength. V. 39. And they, in a first expedition or migration, went to the entrance of Gedor, or Gederah, a district noted for its fertility, even unto the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. V. 40. And they found fat pasture and good, and the land was wide and quiet and peaceable; for they of Ham, probably a tribe of the Canaanitish branch of the children of Ham, had dwelt there of old. V. 41. And these written by name, the above-mentioned princes, came in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and smote their tents, namely, those of the heathen inhabitants, and the habitations that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms, because there was pasture there for their flocks, both the Hamites and the Meunites dwelling with them being exterminated, whereupon the Simeonites occupied their land until the exile. V. 42. And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, in a second expedition, five hundred men, went to Mount Seir, in the country of Edom, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. V. 43. And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, namely, after the victories of Saul and David over their hereditary enemies, which had forced them into the mountains of Edom, where they mingled with the Edomites, and dwelt there unto this day. So the wrath of God finally did exterminate the Amalekites, as He had threatened on account of their trespasses, 1 Sam. 15, 3.

CHAPTER 5.

The Lines of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh East of Jordan.

The Posterity of Reuben. — V. 1. Now, the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel, (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, in the matter of Bilha, his father's secondary wife, Gen. 35, 22; 49, 4, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, Gen. 48, 15. 22; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright; v. 2. for Judah prevailed above his brethren, being made the bearer of the Messianic promise, Gen. 49, 8. 10, and of him came the chief ruler, the prince, or king, David, the reference at this point having Messianic significance; but the birthright, with its double portion, Deut. 21, 27, was Joseph's;) v. 3. the sons, I say, Reuben, the first-born of Israel, who was placed after Judah for the reason just mentioned, were Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. V. 4. The sons of Joel, the head of one line of Reubenites: Shemaiah, his son; Gog, his son; Shimei, his son; v. 5. Micah, his son; Reaia, his son; Baal, his son; v. 6. Beerah, his son, whom Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria, carried away captive; he was prince of the Reubenites, not of the whole tribe, but a very influential man among their families. V. 7. And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned, entered in the registers of the tribe, were the chief, the first or head of the family, Jeiel, and Zechariah. V. 8. And Bela, the son of Azaz, the son of Shema (or Shemaiah), the son of Joel, who

dwelt in Aroer, on the east side of Jordan, **even unto Nebo**, on the range of the same name, over against Jericho, **and Baal-meon**, farther to the east; v. 9. **and eastward he**, the tribe of Reuben, **inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates**, where the wilderness begins which extends from the Euphrates to the eastern border of Perea, **because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead**, wherefore they were continually obliged to seek larger ranges for pasture. V. 10. **And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites**, the Bedouin descendants of Hagar, **who fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents**, more strongly in a nomadic or pastoral form of life than the other tribes, **throughout all the east land of Gilead.** The Reubenites, in consequence of God's punishment, never obtained a position of prominence in the nation, but remained isolated in the east country.

The Posterity of Gad and of Half-Manasseh. — V. 11. **And the children of Gad dwelt over against them**, just north of them, **in the land of Bashan unto Salcah**, in Central Gilead, southeast of the Sea of Galilee: v. 12. **Joel, the chief, and Shapham, the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan**, all of these continuing the line of Gad after the settlement in the Land of Promise. V. 13. **And their brethren of the house of their fathers**, by the families at whose head they stood, and which were named after them, **were Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven.** The pedigree of these brothers is now given through eight generations. V. 14. **These are the children of Abihail, the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz:** v. 15. **Ahi, the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.** V. 16. **And they dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan**, in the middle and northern part of the district so called, including the country immediately east of the Sea of Galilee, **and in her towns, and in all the suburbs**, that is, the pastures, **of Sharon**, east of Jordan, **upon their borders**, literally, "their goings out," to the very end of the districts included in these geographical designations. V. 17. **All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham, king of Judah**, about 758—742, **and in the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel**, about 824—783 B. C. These were the two registrations of the tribe noted in history, at which time the genealogical tables were revised. V. 18. **The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh**, the tribes which occupied the country east of Jordan, **of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword**, the ordinary equipment of a foot-soldier in those days, **and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war**, this being their standing army. V. 19. **And they made war with the Hagarites**, descendants of Hagar, at first identified with the Edomites, but later applied to a special tribe of Arabian Bedouins, **with Jetur, and Nephesh, and Nodab**, the name of the first tribe being preserved in Iturea, west of Lebanon. V. 20. **And they were helped against them**, the Lord Himself taking their part, **and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them**, probably in return for raids which had been made by the desert nomads; **for they cried to God in the battle, and He was intreated of them, because they put their trust in Him**, for these events took place while the tribes of the country east of Jordan were still faithful to the Lord. V. 21. **And they took away their cattle**, as a bit of welcome plunder; **of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand**, of captive and of slain. The great numbers give an idea of the wealth in the possession of these desert tribes. V. 22. **For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God**, He it was that gave them success. **And they dwelt in their steads**, colonizing the district themselves, **until the captivity.** V. 23. **And the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land; they increased from Bashan**, the greater part of which they occupied, **unto Baal-hermon and Senir**, east of Lebanon, **and unto Mount Hermon**, the high mountain in the southern part of the Anti-Lebanon range. V. 24. **And these were the heads of the house of their fathers, even Epher, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, famous men**, whose names were mentioned with respect everywhere, **and heads of the house of their fathers**, of the smaller division of the tribe known as the father-house. V. 25. **And they transgressed against the God of their fathers**, all the Israelites living east of Jordan were unfaithful to Jehovah, **and went a-whoring after the gods of the people of the land**, in a form of spiritual adultery, **whom God destroyed before them.** V. 26. **And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria**, who began the oppression of Israel, 2 Kings 15, 19, **and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria**, his son and successor, **and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara**, or the mountain, **and to the river Gozan**, in Upper Media, toward the Caspian Sea, **unto this day.** As in this case, so in others, the just punishment of the Lord always struck the malefactors.

CHAPTER 6.

The Sons of Levi.

The Line of Priests to the Captivity. — V. 1. **The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari,** Gen. 46, 11; Ex. 6, 16. V. 2. **And the sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel,** Ex. 6, 18. V. 3. **And the children of Amram: Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu,** these two losing their lives when offering sacrifice against God's will, Lev. 10, 1, **Eleazar and Ithamar.** V. 4. **Eleazar begat Phinehas, Phinehas begat Abishua,** v. 5. **and Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi.** It is true that members of the line of Ithamar occupied the office of high priest for a number of generations at this time, Eli being one of them, 1 Sam. 2, 30; but this does not alter the fact that the line of Eleazar alone was really legitimate, and was later restored to its rightful position. V. 6. **And Uzzi begat Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begat Meraioth,** v. 7. **Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,** v. 8. **and Ahitub begat Zadok,** 2 Sam. 8, 17, **and Zadok begat Ahimaaz,** 2 Sam. 15, 27, v. 9. **and Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan,** v. 10. **and Johanan begat Azariah, (he it is that executed the priest's office in the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem, namely,** at the time of King Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26, 17. 18,) v. 11. **and Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,** v. 12. **and Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Shallum,** v. 13. **and Shallum begat Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah,** v. 14. **and Azariah begat Seraiah,** the man who was put to death at Riblah by order of Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings 25, 18. 21, **and Seraiah begat Jehozadak,** v. 15. **and Jehozadak went into captivity** when the Lord carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. The absence of such names as Jehoiada and Uriah is readily explained by the custom of having two names, which was not confined to the kings. V. 16. **The sons of Levi: Gershom** (or Gershon), **Kohath, and Merari.** V. 17. There follows the genealogy of the Levitical families who were not priests. **And these be the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei.** V. 18. **And the sons of Kohath were Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.** V. 19. **The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. And these are the families of the Levites according to their fathers.** V. 20. **Of Gershom: Libni, his son; Jahath, his son; Zimmah, his son;** v. 21. **Joah** (or Ethan), **his son; Iddo** (or Adaiah), **his son; Zerah, his son; Jeaterai** (or Ethni), **his son.** V. 22. **The sons of Kohath: Amminadab** (or Izhar), **his son; Korah, his son; Assir, his son;** v. 23. **Elkanah, his son; and Ebiasaph, his son; and Assir, his son;** v. 24. **Tahath, his son; Uriel, his son; Uzziah, his son; and Shaul, his son.** V. 25. **And the sons of Elkanah: Amassai and Ahimoth.** V. 26. **As for Elkanah,** probably a different one from him who is mentioned above; **the sons of Elkanah: Zophai** (or Zuph), **his son; and Nahath, his son;** v. 27. **Eliab, his son; Jeroham, his son; Elkanah, his son.** V. 28. **And the sons of Samuel,** who himself was also a son of Elkanah: **the firstborn, Vashni** (or rather, Joel, 1 Sam. 8, 2), **and Abiah.** V. 29. **The sons of Merari,** continued from v. 19: **Mahli; Libni, his son; Shimei, his son; Uzza, his son;** v. 30. **Shimea, his son; Haggiah, his son; Asaiah, his son.** V. 31. **And these are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord,** in the tent which he had erected in Jerusalem, after that the ark had rest, its transfer to Jerusalem having been completed successfully, chap. 16, 1. David arranged for a proper liturgical service in connection with the Tabernacle worship, the Levites here enumerated being in charge of this part of divine worship. V. 32. **And they ministered before the dwelling-place of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** after David had erected these temporary quarters, **with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem; and then they waited on their office according to their order,** not only their grouping, but also the position of the various groups having been arranged by the great poet-king. V. 33. **And these are they that waited with their children,** in charge of the liturgical part of worship. **Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman, a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel,** that is, Samuel, v. 34. **the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah** (or Nahath), v. 35. **the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai,** v. 36. **the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah,** v. 37. **the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah,** v. 38. **the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel,** the descending line of Heman thus being traced back to the ancestor of the nation. V. 39. **And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand,** namely, during the chanting in the Tabernacle and Temple services, **even Asaph, the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea,** v. 40. **the son of Michael the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah,** v. 41. **the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah,** v. 42. **the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei,** v. 43. **the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi.** So Asaph was the brother of Heman not only by virtue of a common office, but also

of a close relationship. V. 44. **And their brethren, the sons of Merari, stood on the left hand: Ethan** (or Jeduthun), **the son of Kishi** (or Kushaiah), **the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch,** v. 45. **the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah,** v. 46. **the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer,** v. 47. **the son of Mahli,** this name occurring several times in the case of near relatives, **the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.** V. 48. **Their brethren also, the Levites,** namely, the other Levites besides the singers just mentioned, **were appointed unto all manner of service of the Tabernacle of the house of God,** certain tasks being assigned to the various families or groups. V. 49. **But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of the burnt offering,** that was their first duty, to offer the sacrifices, **and on the altar of incense,** which was burned at the regular morning and evening hour of worship, **and were appointed for all of the work of the place most holy, and to make an atonement for Israel,** the offering on the Great Day of Atonement being entirely in the hands of the high priest, **according to all that Moses, the servant of God, had commanded.** Cp. Num. 18, 1—7; 1 Chron. 28, 13; Lev. 16, 32. V. 50. **And these are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar, his son; Phinehas, his son; Abishua, his son;** v. 51. **Bukki, his son; Uzzi, his son; Zerahiah, his son;** v. 52. **Meraioth, his son; Amariah, his son; Ahitub, his son;** v. 53. **Zadok, his son; Ahimaaz, his son,** this repetition of the high priests' names bringing the list down to the time of Solomon. A well-regulated, beautiful order of services, if not attended by dead orthodoxy, is very well-pleasing to the Lord.

The Cities of the Levites. — V. 54. **Now, these are their dwelling-places throughout their castles in their coasts,** literally, "by their districts in their border," **of the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites; for theirs was the lot.** Cp. Josh. 21. V. 55. **And they gave them Hebron, in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof,** that is, the pasture-land, **round about it.** V 56. **But the fields of the city,** the land under cultivation, **and the villages thereof, they gave to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh,** Josh. 14, 13; 15, 13. V. 57. **And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, namely, Hebron, the city of refuge,** for those guilty of involuntary manslaughter, **and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa with their suburbs,** v. 58. **and Hilen** (or Holon) **with her suburbs, Debir with her suburbs,** v. 59. **and Ashan** (or Ain) **with her suburbs, and Beth-shemesh with her suburbs;** v. 60. **and out of the tribe of Benjamin: Geba with her suburbs, and Alemeth with her suburbs, and Anathoth with her suburbs. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities,** the names of the remaining two being given Josh. 21, 16. 17. V. 61. **And unto the sons of Kohath, which were left of the family of that tribe, were cities given out of the half-tribe, namely, out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, by lot, ten cities,** Josh. 21, 26. V. 62. **And to the sons of Gershom throughout their families out of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan,** east of the Jordan, **thirteen cities.** V. 63. **Unto the sons of Merari were given by lot, throughout their families, out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad,** in the southern section of the country east of Jordan, **and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities,** Josh. 21, 7. V. 64. **And the children of Israel gave to the Levites,** both the priests and the three families into which they were divided, **these cities with their suburbs.** V. 65. **And they gave by lot out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon,** included within that of Judah, **and out of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, these cities, which are called by their names.** V. 66. **And the residue of the families of the sons of Kohath,** so far as the remaining Kohathites were concerned, **they had cities of their coasts out of the tribe of Ephraim.** V. 67. **And they gave unto them, of the cities of refuge,** whose total number was six, **Shechem, in Mount Ephraim, with her suburbs; they gave also Gezer with her suburbs,** v. 68. **and Jokmeam with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs,** v. 69. **and Aijalon with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs;** v. 70. **and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh,** the part west of Jordan: **Aner with her suburbs and Bileam with her suburbs, for the family of the remnant of the sons of Kohath.** Cp. Josh. 21, 22—35. V. 71. **Unto the sons of Gershom were given out of the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh,** east of Jordan, **Golan, in Bashan, with her suburbs, and Ashtaroth with her suburbs;** v. 72. **and out of the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with her suburbs, Daberath with her suburbs,** v. 73. **and Ramoth with her suburbs, and Anem with her suburbs;** v. 74. **and out of the tribe of Asher: Mashal with her suburbs, and Abdon with her suburbs,** v. 75. **and Hukok with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs;** v. 76. **and out of the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh, in Galilee, with her suburbs, and Hammon with her suburbs, and Kirjathaim with her suburbs.** V. 77. **Unto the rest of the children of Merari were given out of the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmon with her suburbs, Tabor with her suburbs;** v. 78. **and on the other side Jordan by Jericho, on the east side of**

Jordan, were given them out of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer, in the wilderness, with her suburbs, and Jahzah with her suburbs, v. 79. Kedemoth also with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; v. 80. and out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth, in Gilead, with her suburbs, and Mahanaim with her suburbs, v. 81. and Heshbon with her suburbs, and Jazer with her suburbs. "As to these cities that were assigned to the Levites, they were widely remote and separated — partly in fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy, Gen. 49, 7, and partly that the various districts of the country might obtain a competent supply of teachers, who might instruct the people in the knowledge and animate them to the observance of a law which had so important a bearing on the promotion both of their private happiness and their national prosperity."

CHAPTER 7.

The Posterity of Various Tribes.

The Line of Issachar, Benjamin, and Naphtali. — V. 1. **Now, the sons,** and descendants, **of Issachar were Tola, and Puah** (or Phuvah), **Jashub** (or Job), **and Shimrom, four.** Cp. Num. 16, 23 ff. V. 2. **And the sons of Tola: Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, to wit, of Tola,** chiefs of these subdivisions of the tribe, the father-houses; **they were valiant men of might in their generations,** as they were registered in the mustering-lists; **whose number was in the days of David,** perhaps at the time of his unfortunate census, **two and twenty thousand and six hundred.** V. 3. **And the sons of Uzzi: Izrahiah; and the sons of Izrahiah: Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five; all of them chief men,** both the father and each of his four sons at the head of a numerous and influential division of their tribe. V. 4. **And with them, by their generations,** as they were enrolled in the mustering-lists, **after the house of their fathers, were bands of soldiers for war, six and thirty thousand men; for they had many wives and sons,** this note being included to explain the extraordinary increase in numbers. V. 5. **And their brethren among all the families of Issachar,** all the other members of the tribe, **were valiant men of might, reckoned in all by their genealogies fourscore and seven thousand.** V. 6. **The sons of Benjamin,** this being a preliminary list, a more detailed one following in the next chapter: **Bela, and Becher, and Jediael** (or Ashbel), **three,** these being apparently the chiefs of the most illustrious families. V. 7. **And the sons of Bela,** some of those mentioned being sons in the wider sense, that is, descendants: **Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of the house of their fathers,** chiefs of these divisions in the tribe, the father-houses, **mighty men of valor; and were reckoned by their genealogies twenty and two thousand and thirty and four.** V. 8. **And the sons of Becher: Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alemeth,** the last two names also being found as applied to cities in the tribe of Benjamin. **All these are the sons of Becher.** V. 9. **And the number of them, after their genealogy by their generations,** as the mustering-lists showed, **heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valor, was twenty thousand and two hundred.** V. 10. **The sons also of Jediael: Bilhan; and the sons of Bilhan: Jeush, and Benjamin, and Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Ahishahar.** V. 11. **All these the sons,** the descendants, **of Jediael, by the heads of their fathers,** as registered, **mighty men of valor, were seventeen thousand and two hundred soldiers, fit to go out for war and battle.** V. 12. **Shuppim also and Huppim, the children of Ir, and Hushim, the sons of Aher.** The reference seems to be to the descendants of the only son of Dan, Gen. 46, 23, who is otherwise not mentioned in this list. V. 13. **The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah,** Naphtali and Dan being the sons of this handmaid, and the descendants here named continued the tribe. The growth and the power of all these tribes agreed exactly with the promises of God.

The Line of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher. — V. 14. **The sons of Manasseh: Ashriel, whom she bare; (but his concubine, the Aramitess, bare Machir, the father of Gilead;** the construction is somewhat involved, the intention of the writer evidently being to say that Ashriel was the son of the Syrian concubine and Machir that of his first wife; v. 15. **and Machir took to wife the sister of Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name was Maachah;) and the name of the second was Zelophehad, a descendant of Machir; and Zelophehad had daughters,** Num. 27, 1; 28, 1. V. 16. **And Maachah, the wife of Machir, bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rakem.** V. 17. **And the sons of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons,** that is, the descendants, **of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.** It should be noted here that not every link of a chain of descendants

is mentioned, but only such as were prominent and notable for the one or the other reason. V. 18. **And his**, Machir's, **sister Hammoleketh bare Ishod, and Abiezer, and Mahalah.** V. 19. **And the sons of Shemidah**, a grandson of Manasseh and son of Gilead, **were Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam.** V. 20. **And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered, his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah, his son, and Tahath, his son,** cp. Num. 26, 25, v. 21. **and Zabad, his son, and Shuthelah, his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because,** or when, **they came down to take away their cattle.** This incident happened during the sojourn in Egypt. It seems that a band of Philistines made a raid on the settlement of the children of Jacob in Egypt for the purpose of stealing cattle, at which time they slew these two sons of Ephraim. V. 22. **And Ephraim, their father, mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him,** after the custom of the Orient. V. 23. **And when he went in to his wife,** after this Philistine raid, **she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah** ("calamity"), **because it went evil with his house.** V. 24. **(And his daughter was Sherah, who built Bethhoron, the nether and the upper, and Uzzen-sherah,** towns on the south border of Ephraim, between the tribes of Benjamin and Dan.) V. 25. **And Rephah was his son, also Resheph, and Telah, his son, and Tahan,** v. 26. **his son, Laadan, his son, Ammihud, his son, Elishama, his son,** v. 27. **Non** (or Nun), **his son, Jehoshua, his son.** So there were nine generations in the line of Joshua during the sojourn in Egypt. V. 28. **And their possessions and habitations were Bethel and the towns thereof, and eastward Naaran and westward Gezer, with the towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof, unto Gaza and the towns thereof.** V. 29. **And by the borders of the children of Manasseh,** on the boundary, and within their possession, **Beth-shean and her towns, Taanach and her towns, Megiddo and her towns, Dor and her towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel.** It seems clear from this section that a part of the tribe of Ephraim, some time during the sojourn in Egypt, left the country, probably as a reprisal for the Philistine raid, and occupied some towns on the Philistine border. V. 30. **The sons of Asher: Imnah, and Isuah, and Ishuai, and Beriah, and Serah, their sister.** Cp. Gen. 46, 17; Num. 26, 44 ff. V. 31. **And the sons of Beriah: Heber, and Malchiel, who is the father of Birzavith.** V. 32. **And Heber begat Japhlet, and Shomer, and Hotham, and Shua, their sister.** V. 33. **And the sons of Japhlet: Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath. These are the children of Japhlet.** V. 34. **And the sons of Shamer,** the Shomer just mentioned: **Ahi, and Rogah, Jehubbah, and Aram.** V. 35. **And the sons of his brother Helem: Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal.** V. 36. **The sons of Zophah: Suah, and Harnepher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah,** v. 37. **Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and Ithran, and Beera.** V. 38. **And the sons of Jether: Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara.** V. 39. **And the sons of Ulla: Arah, and Haniel, and Rezia.** V. 40. **All these were the children of Asher, heads of their father's house,** the most influential men at the head of these divisions, **choice and mighty men of valor, chief of the princes. And the number throughout the genealogy of them that were apt to the war and to battle,** their register for the service in war, the reference apparently being to the mighty family of Heber alone, **was twenty and six thousand men.** This great increase was a proof of the Lord's bountiful blessing.

CHAPTER 8.

The Posterity of Benjamin.

The Line of the Tribe of Benjamin. — V. 1. **Now, Benjamin begat Bela, his firstborn, Ashbel, the second, and Aharah, the third,** v. 2. **Nohah, the fourth, and Rapha, the fifth.** The fact that many names in the list following are different from those given by Moses is due either to the custom of having more than one name or to the use of the word "sons" in the wider sense, which includes grandsons and even descendants farther removed. V. 3. **And the sons of Bela were Addar** (or Ard), **and Gera, and Abihud,** v. 4. **and Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah,** v. 5. **and Gera, and Shephuphan, and Huram.** Cp. Gen. 46, 21; Num. 26, 38. 39. V. 6. **And these are the sons of Ehud; these are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba,** a Levitical city otherwise known as Gibea of Benjamin, 1 Sam. 13, 3. 16, **and they removed them to Manahath;** v. 7. **and Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera, he removed them,** it was under his direction that the transfer to Manahath was effected, **and begat Uzza and Ahihud.** V. 8. **And Shaharaim begat children in the country of Moab,** where he may have gone during one of the famines in the time of the Judges, **after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara were his wives.** It appears that he forsook his wives for the time of the famine and married a Moabite woman, returning afterward,

however, to his first wives. V. 9. **And he begat of Hodesh, his wife, Jobab, and Zibia, and Mesha, and Malcham,** v. 10. **and Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirma. These were his sons, heads of the fathers,** powerful and influential leaders of large divisions in the tribe. V. 11. **And of Hushim he begat Ahitub and Elpaal.** V. 12. **The sons of Elpaal: Eber, and Misham, and Shamed, who built Ono and Lod with the towns thereof,** these being cities on the extreme western boundary of Benjamin; v. 13. **Beriah also and Shema, who were heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon,** in the neighborhood of the other cities, **who drove away the inhabitants of Gath,** the Philistine city-state at some distance to the west; v. 14. **and Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth,** v. 15. **and Zebadiah, and Arad, and Ader,** v. 16. **and Michael, and Ispah, and Joha, the sons of Beriah;** v. 17. **and Zebadiah, and Meshullam, and Hezeki, and Heber,** v. 18. **Ishmerai also, and Jezliah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal;** v. 19. **and Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi,** v. 20. **and Elienai, and Zilthai, and Eliel,** v. 21. **and Adaiah, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of Shimhi** (or Shema); v. 22. **and Ishpan, and Heber, and Eliel,** v. 23. **and Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan,** v. 24. **and Hananiah, and Elam, and Antothijah,** v. 25. **and Iphedeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak;** v. 26. **and Shamsherai, and Shehariah, and Athaliah,** v. 27. **and Jaresiah, and Eliah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham.** V. 28. **These were heads of the fathers by their generations, chief men,** the registration lists showed them to be leaders in their respective divisions. **These dwelt in Jerusalem,** whose upper city was really in the tribe of Benjamin. V. 29. **And at Gibeon,** some eight miles northwest of Jerusalem, **dwelt the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name was Maachah;** v. 30. **and his first-born son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab,** v. 31. **and Gedor, and Ahio, and Zacher** (or Zachariah). V. 32. **And Mikloth begat Shimeah. And these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them,** in a special quarter near them. The tribe of Benjamin recovered in a very remarkable manner after the events which almost resulted in its extermination, Judg. 20 and 21.

The Family of Saul and Jonathan. — V. 33. **And Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul,** 1 Sam. 14, 51, **and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal** (or Ishbosheth). V. 34. **And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal** (or Mephibosheth); **and Merib-baal begat Micah,** 2 Sam. 9, 12. V. 35. **And the sons of Micah were Pithon, and Melech, and Tarea, and Ahaz.** V. 36. **And Ahaz begat Jehoadah** (or Jarah); **and Jehoadah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza;** v. 37. **and Moza begat Binea. Rapha was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son.** V. 38. **And Azel had six sons, whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel.** V. 39. **And the sons of Eshek, his brother, were: Ulam, his first-born, Jehush, the second, and Eliphelet, the third.** V. 40. **And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor, archers,** who needed great strength and skill to handle the bow, **and had many sons, and sons' sons, an hundred and fifty,** large families at that time being rightly regarded as special blessings of the Lord. **All these are the sons of Benjamin.** It proved of benefit to this small tribe that it became affiliated with the tribe of Judah and the true worship.

CHAPTER 9.

The Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the Exile.

The Registration Lists of Israel. — V. 1. **So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies, their names were entered in the genealogical records; and, behold, they were written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression.** The books referred to are the official lists as kept in the royal archives. These public records contained also much historical material, and from this the sacred writers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, drew much of the contents of their books. Thus the entire account is distinguished for truth and correctness. V. 2. **Now, the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions in their cities,** after the return from the Babylonian exile, **were the Israelites, the members of the nation in general, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinim,** chiefly members of the conquered heathen nations who were made servants in the Tabernacle and the Temple, performing the meaner tasks connected with the worship, Josh. 9, 27; 1 Sam. 1, 11. V. 3. **And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh,** such Israelites as had fled to Judah at the time of the Assyrian invasion and were considered members of the southern kingdom; v. 4. **Uthai, the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children of Pharez, the son of Judah.** V. 5. **And of the Shilonites,** probably the descendants of Shelah, Num. 26, 20: **Asaiah, the first-born, and his sons.** V. 6. **And of the sons of Zerah:**

Jeuel and their brethren, namely, including the three chiefs mentioned in verse 4, **six hundred and ninety.** V. 7. **And of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu, the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah,** Neh. 11, 7, v. 8. **and Ibneiah, the son of Jeroham, and Elah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam, the son of Shephathiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah;** v. 9. **and their brethren,** according to their generations, **nine hundred and fifty and six. All these men were chief of the fathers in the house of their fathers,** leaders in those divisions of the tribes known as father-houses. V. 10. **And of the priests: Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, and Jachin,** these being the names of the three priestly classes dwelling in Jerusalem, Neh. 11, 10 ff. V. 11. **And Azariah** (or Seraiah), **the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God,** the prince, or president, of the Temple; v. 12. **and Adaiah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiai, the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer,** cp. Neh. 11, 12; 1 Chron. 24, 14; v. 13. **and their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; very able men,** literally, "mighty men of valor," **for the work of the service of the house of God,** willing, energetic, effective in all the tasks falling to their lot in the priestly office. V. 14. **And of the Levites: Shemaiah, the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari,** one of the three great Levitical families; v. 15. **and Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah, the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph;** v. 16. **and Obadiah, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun** (or Ethan), **and Berechiah, the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netophathites,** not far from Bethlehem, Neh. 7, 26. V. 17. **And the porters,** the captains of the four companies that guarded the four sides and the gates of the Temple, cp. Neh. 11, 19, **were Shallum, and Akkub, and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their brethren. Shallum was the chief,** v. 18. **who hitherto waited in the King's Gate eastward,** leading to the royal palace, which was reserved for the use of the king; **they were porters in the companies of the children of Levi.** There being no king in Judah after the return of the people, the King's Gate was always locked, and no porter was needed there. V. 19. **And Shallum, the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the Tabernacle,** as briefly stated above; **and their fathers, being over the host of the Lord, were keepers of the entry;** the descendants of Korah, as a branch of the Kohathites, had been in charge of the entrance of the Tabernacle in the wilderness at the time of Moses, as their descendants, in turn, were in charge of the Temple gates. V. 20. **And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was the ruler over them in time past,** Num. 31, 6; **and the Lord was with him.** V. 21. **And Zechariah, the son of Meshelemiah, was porter of the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** he held this office at the time of David. V. 22. **All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve,** under the four captains named in verse 17. **These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages,** they were registered in their homes near Jerusalem, **whom David and Samuel, the seer, did ordain in their set office,** charging them with their official duty and making the office hereditary. V. 23. **So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord,** namely, **the house of the Tabernacle, by wards.** V. 24. **In four quarters were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south;** there they were stationed. V. 25. **And their brethren, which were in their villages, were to come after seven days from time to time with them,** that is, the *personnel* of the groups, of the sections in charge of the gates, was changed every week, and on the Sabbath apparently all were on duty. V. 26. **For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in their set office,** entrusted with the discharge of these duties, **and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God,** they were in the side-buildings of the Temple, over which the Levites presided. It is well-pleasing to the Lord if all things pertaining to the external parts of the worship are done decently and in order, under the direction of men especially appointed for that work.

The Charge of the Levites. — V. 27. **And they,** the Levites in general, **lodged round about the house of God, because the charge was upon them, and the opening thereof every morning pertained to them,** the large gates had to be opened every morning at a specified time. V. 28. **And certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels,** they were responsible for the precious vessels used for the sacrifices, **that they should bring them in and out by tale,** for of everything in the Temple treasuries a careful count was kept. V. 29. **Some of them also were appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the Sanctuary,** all those used in the ordinary daily offerings, **and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices,** all the

materials used for incense, for meat- and drink-offerings. V. 30. **And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices,** a precious and singular oil, used exclusively for sacred purposes. V. 31. **And Mattithiah, one of the Levites, who was the first-born of Shallum the Korahite, had the set office over the things that were made in the pans,** literally, "was in trust over the baking in pans," Lev. 2, 5; 6, 14. V. 32. **And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the showbread, to prepare it every Sabbath,** Lev. 24, 6—8. So the entire worship was once more organized in line with the institution of the Lord. V. 33. **And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who, remaining in the chambers, were free,** they were exclusively engaged in the liturgical part of the services and were therefore excused from other work; **for they were employed in that work day and night;** when not actually engaged in public worship, they were busy practising the difficult liturgical melodies. V. 34. **These chief fathers of the Levites,** heads of the father-houses among the Levites, **were chief throughout their generations; these dwelt at Jerusalem.** The genealogy of Saul is here repeated, as an introduction to the historical section of the book, which opens with an account of the fall of Saul's house. V. 35. **And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name was Maachah;** v. 36. **and his first-born son Abdon, then Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab,** v. 37. **and Gedor, and Ahio, and Zechariah, and Mikloth.** V. 38. **And Mikloth begat Shimeam. And they also dwelt with their brethren at Jerusalem, over against their brethren.** V. 39. **And Ner begat Kish; and Kish begat Saul; and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal.** V. 40. **And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat Micah.** V. 41. **And the sons of Micah were Pithon, and Melech, and Tahrea, and Ahaz.** V. 42. **And Ahaz begat Jarah; and Jarah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza;** v. 43. **and Moza begat Binea; and Rephaiah, his son, Eleasah, his son, Azel, his son.** V. 44. **And Azel had six sons, whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan; these were the sons of Azel.** Cp. chap. 8, 28—38.

CHAPTER 10.

Saul's Overthrow and Death.

The Battle near Mount Gilboa. — V. 1. **Now, the Philistines fought against Israel,** in the Plain of Jezreel, 1 Sam. 31; **and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain,** wounded and killed, **in Mount Gilboa,** where they were trying to make their escape. V. 2. **And the Philistines followed hard after Saul and after his sons,** clinging to their footsteps, intending, above all, to put them out of the way. **And the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.** V. 3. **And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers,** literally, "he trembled for the archers," he was seized with a sudden terror as they gradually closed in upon him. V. 4. **Then said Saul to his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised,** a common name for the heathen, as not being partakers of the covenant of Jehovah, **come and abuse me,** insult him, make mockery of him as a vanquished enemy. **But his armor-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid;** he dreaded the vengeance of the Lord upon him in case he would lay his hand upon the anointed king of the nation. **So Saul took a sword and fell upon it,** committing suicide, dying the death of a coward. V. 5. **And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword and died,** following the bad example of his sovereign. V. 6. **So Saul died, and his three sons and all his house,** his near relatives and the members of his household, **died together.** V. 7. **And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities,** out in the open country, **and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them,** establishing their outposts in the very midst of the country of Israel. Thus the wrath of the Lord overtook Saul, because he had forsaken His precepts and insisted upon going his own way. God will not be mocked, as many a scoffer has found out to his sorrow.

The Triumph of the Philistines. — V. 8. **And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain,** to make the customary plunder of personal belongings, **that they found Saul and his sons fallen in Mount Gilboa.** V. 9. **And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols,** to whom they attributed this victory, **and to the people.** V. 10. **And they put his armor in the house of their gods,** in the temple of Astarte, as trophies of the great victory, **and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon,** their chief god, while the trunk was affixed to the wall

of Beth-shan, 1 Sam. 31, 10. V. 11. **And when all Jabesh-gilead**, the inhabitants of the city east of Jordan, which owed so much to Saul, **heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul**, v. 12. **they arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul**, from the wall of Beth-shan, **and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days**, in token of mourning. Cp. 1 Sam. 31, 11—13. V. 13. **So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not**, 1 Sam. 13, 13, **and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it**, 1 Sam. 28, 7; v. 14. **and enquired not of the Lord**, namely, after sound repentance; **therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse.** Rejecting the Word of God is equivalent to rejecting the Lord Himself and is followed by the same punishment. A professed Christian who seeks the advice of the modern necromancers and fortune-tellers by that fact sets aside his Christian faith, sinning against the Second Commandment.

CHAPTER 11.

King David and His Mighty Men.

David King of All Israel. — V. 1. **Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron**, representatives of the northern and eastern tribes, as well as of Judah, where he had already reigned over seven years, **saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh**, relatives by reason of a common ancestry. V. 2. **And moreover, in time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel**; for David, before Saul sought his life, had been one of the chief officers of his army; **and the Lord, thy God, said unto thee**, namely, by Samuel, the prophet, a fact which had become generally known, 1 Sam. 16, 1—3; 2 Sam. 3, 9. 18, **Thou shalt feed My people Israel**, said of the fostering care which a king should show his people, **and thou shalt be ruler over My people Israel.** V. 3. **Therefore came all the elders of Israel**, the representatives of the estates of the kingdom, **to the king to Hebron**, 2 Sam. 5, 1—3; **and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel**, the entire nation thus acknowledging him as sovereign, **according to the word of the Lord by Samuel**, 1 Sam. 16, 1. 12. 13. V. 4. **And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus**, that being the original name of the town, as the author thought it necessary to mention at this late date; **where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land**; for this heathen nation had maintained its ancient location even after the conquest of the land by Joshua. V. 5. **And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David**, in an overconfident boast, **Thou shalt not come hither**; for even at that time the fortifications of their city were practically impregnable. **Nevertheless, David took the castle of Zion**, the strongest part of the city's defenses, **which is the City of David**, the part afterward occupied by the royal residence. V. 6. **And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain.** This is only a part of David's speech, the complete promise being given 2 Sam. 5, 8. **So Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went first up and was chief**, he became general of David's army. V. 7. **And David dwelt in the castle**, in the fortress of the city; **therefore they called it the City of David.** V. 8. **And he built the city round about**, this upper section of Jerusalem, **even from Millo**, the fortress on the northwest corner of Zion, **round about**, returning to this corner after making the circuit; **and Joab repaired the rest of the city**, the lower city, which had naturally suffered during the siege of the city. V. 9. **So David waxed greater and greater**, he increased in power continually; **for the Lord of hosts**, in whom alone he placed his trust, **was with him.** The same thought is uttered by St. Paul, when he says: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

David's Mighty Men and Their Deeds. — V. 10. **These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had**, the great heroes or champions of his army, **who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom**, standing bravely by him during his entire reign, **and with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the Lord concerning Israel.** V. 11. **And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had**, for they apparently formed a band with a definite number of members; **Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains**, head of thirty heroes; **he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain by him at one time**, the total number overthrown by him probably being eight hundred, 2 Sam. 23, 8,2) the five hundred being wounded or scattered. V. 12. **And after him was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighties.** Cp. 2 Sam. 23, 11. V. 13. **He was with David at Pas-dammim** (or Ephes-dammim), **and there the Philistines were**

2) The chances are that a copyist at this point confused the Hebrew signs for 3 and 8, and that 800 should be read.

gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley, a part of the field, at least, being sowed to lentils; **and the people fled from before the Philistines.** V. 14. **And they,** Shammah being mentioned especially as standing up with Eleazar, and even taking his place when he was exhausted, **set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord saved them by a great deliverance.** Cp. 2 Sam. 23, 9—11. V. 15. **Now, three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam,** near the Philistine frontier, **and the host of the Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim,** some distance west of Jerusalem. V. 16. **And David was then in the hold,** in his mountain stronghold in the wilderness, **and the Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem,** an advanced outpost. V. 17. **And David longed,** in remembrance of the cooling water of his home town, **and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem that is at the gate!** V. 18. **And the three,** also members of this famous band, **brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David,** an act showing their devotion to their beloved leader. **But David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the Lord,** as a sort of drink-offering, v. 19. **and said, My God forbid it me that I should do this thing; shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it.** He considered that they risked their lives, their hearts' life-blood, in performing this act of kindness. **Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest,** members of the band of David's most valiant heroes. V. 20. **And Abishai, the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three,** 2 Sam. 23, 18—23, he also was a member of this illustrious band; **for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew them and had a name among the three,** distinguished for his valor. V. 21. **Of the three he was more honorable than the two, he was doubly, most conspicuously, honored, for he was their captain; howbeit he attained not to the first three.** There seems to have been no difference in bravery, but only in the number of feats accomplished. V. 22. **Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done many acts,** conspicuous for courageous feats; **he slew two lionlike men of Moab; also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.** Cp. 2 Sam. 23, 20. V. 23. **And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high** (about eight feet); **and in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam,** on the order of that carried by Goliath; **and he went down to him with a staff,** his walking-stick being his only weapon, **and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.** V. 24. **These things did Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among the three mighties,** apparently in the second division of the band of valiant heroes. V. 25. **Behold, he was honorable among the thirty, but attained not to the first three; and David set him over his guard,** which, in turn, seems to have been made up of the bravest of David's six hundred followers, who were commanded by his champions. V. 26. **Also the valiant men of the armies,** the heroes in all the wars which David waged, **were: Asahel, the brother of Joab, Elhanan, the son of Dodo, of Bethlehem,** v. 27. **Shammoth** (or Shammah) **the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite,** v. 28. **Ira, the son of Ikkesh, the Tekoite, Abiezer the Antothite,** v. 29. **Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai** (or Zalmon), **the Ahohite,** v. 30. **Maharai the Netophathite, Heled** (or Heleb), **the son of Baanah, the Netophathite,** v. 31. **Ithai, the son of Ribai, of Gibeah, that pertained to the children of Benjamin,** being Saul's own city, **Benaiah the Pirathonite,** v. 32. **Hurai** (or Hiddai) **of the brooks of Gaash,** in the mountains of Ephraim, **Abiel** (or Abialbon) **the Arbathite,** v. 33. **Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,** v. 34. **the sons of Hashem** (or Jashen) **the Gizonite, Jonathan, the son of Shage, the Hararite,** v. 35. **Ahiam, the son of Sacar** (or Sharar), **the Hararite, Eliphal** (or Eliphelet), **the son of Ur** (or Ahasbai), v. 36. **Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite,** v. 37. **Hezro** (or Hezrai) **the Carmelite, Naarai** (or Paarai), **the son of Ezbai,** v. 38. **Joel, the brother of Nathan, Mibhar, the son of Haggeri** (or the Haggerite), v. 39. **Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armor-bearer of Joab, the son of Zeruiah,** v. 40. **Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,** v. 41. **Uriah the Hittite, Zabad, the son of Ahlai,** v. 42. **Adina, the son of Shiza, the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him,** v. 43. **Hanan, the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite,** v. 44. **Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel, the sons of Hothan the Aroerite,** v. 45. **Jediael, the son of Shimri** (or the Shimrite), **and Joha, his brother, the Tizite,** v. 46. **Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite,** v. 47. **Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.** It was a fine thing that the names of these great heroes were preserved, as a constant example to the children of Israel. But a much finer thing it is for the Christians to have their names recorded in the book of life.

CHAPTER 12.

Further Lists of David's Champions.

The Companies that Came to David at Ziklag. — V. 1. **Now, these are they that came to David to Ziklag,** in the Philistine country, 1 Sam. 27, 6, **while he yet kept himself close because of Saul, the son of Kish,** his return to the country of Israel being still hindered by the enmity of Saul; **and they,** the men who joined David there, **were among the mighty men, helpers of the war.** V. 2. **They were armed with bows,** their work consisting in bending the bow in shooting, **and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones,** as slingers, and shooting arrows out of a bow, thus having ambidextrous skill, **even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin,** members of the very tribe to which Saul belonged who were in some miraculous manner induced to share the fortunes of David. V. 3. **The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah** (or Hasmaah) **the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Berachah, and Jehu the Antothite,** v. 4. **and Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty and over the thirty,** at least temporarily in command of these heroes; **and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad the Gederathite,** v. 5. **Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite,** v. 6. **Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites,** the last-named being men of Judah, v. 7. **and Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.** V. 8. **And of the Gadites,** members of the tribe of Gad, **there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness,** during the first year of his flight before Saul, 1 Sam. 22, **men of might and men of war fit for the battle,** trained soldiers, **that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions,** set in lines denoting bravery, **and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains,** trained for fleetness as well as for valor, for pursuit as well as for offense: v. 9. **Ezer, the first; Obadiah, the second; Eliab, the third;** v. 10. **Mishmannah, the fourth; Jeremiah, the fifth;** v. 11. **Attai, the sixth; Eliel, the seventh;** v. 12. **Johanan, the eighth; Elzabad, the ninth;** v. 13. **Jeremiah, the tenth; Machbanai, the eleventh.** V. 14. **These were the sons of Gad, captains of the host,** all of them officers in David's army; **one of the least was over an hundred and the greatest over a thousand;** even the least of these heroes was able to withstand a hundred enemies, while the most valiant of them could cope with a thousand. V. 15. **These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflown all his banks, during the spring rise; and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east and toward the west.** Having separated themselves from the Gadites who clung to Saul, they were obliged to cut their way through the host of Saul and, at the same time, to negotiate the swollen river, a doubly heroic deed. V. 16. **And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David,** the reference here being to a special band that came to join David. V. 17. **And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you,** their mutual friendship would be so firm as to make their hearts one; **but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands,** he being innocent of any deed of violence, **the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it.** Years of persecution had made David suspicious of all men, so that he feared treachery. V. 18. **Then the spirit came upon Amasai,** enveloping him like a cloak, **who was chief of the captains,** 2 Sam. 17, 25, **and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse. Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee.** He expressed the unanimous conviction of all his followers that the cause of David was owned and blessed of God, and therefore pledged the loyalty of them all. **Then David received them and made them captains of the band.** V. 19. **And there fell some of Manasseh to David when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle,** when Achish, the Philistine king, took him along to the Plain of Jezreel, 1 Sam. 29, 2. **But they helped them not; for the lords of the Philistines, upon advisement, sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads,** literally, "for our heads," that is, for the price of their heads, which they would have to sacrifice in return for their foolishness in keeping David as an ally, 1 Sam. 29, 4. V. 20. **As he went to Ziklag,** when he was returning home after this incident, **there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh.** V. 21. **And they helped David against the band of the rovers,** those who had plundered Ziklag during his absence, 1 Sam. 30, 1. 9. 10; **for they were all mighty men of valor, and were captains in the host.** V. 22. **For at that time day by day there came to David to help him,** gradually increasing the number of his followers, **until it was a great host, like the host of God.** From having only six hundred men loyal to him, his army soon grew so as to include hundreds, thousands, and finally hundreds of thousands, a great and powerful host. Thus the Lord, who directs the hearts of men

as the rivers of water, helped the cause of David, who put his trust in Him alone.

The Companies that Came to David at Hebron. — V. 23. **And these are the numbers of the bands,** the sums or masses of the warriors armed for military service, **that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron,** after the seven and a half years of his rule in that capital, **to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.** V. 24. **The children of Judah that bare shield and spear were six thousand and eight hundred, ready armed to the war,** both fully equipped and properly trained. V. 25. **Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valor for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.** V. 26. **Of the children of Levi four thousand and six hundred.** V. 27. **And Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites,** not the high priest, but the chief of their warriors, probably the father of Benaiah, chap. 11, 22; **and with him were three thousand and seven hundred.** V. 28. **And Zadok, a young man mighty of valor,** 2 Sam. 8, 17, probably the same man whom Solomon afterward made high priest, 1 Kings 2, 26, **and of his father's house twenty and two captains.** V. 29. **And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand,** for many members of this tribe were still anxious to have the crown remain in the family of Saul; **for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.** V. 30. **And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valor, famous throughout the house of their fathers;** they were distinguished in general, in their father-houses, for their warlike bravery. V. 31. **And of the half-tribe of Manasseh,** the western half, **eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name, to come and make David king.** V. 32. **And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do,** eminent for their knowledge of astronomical and physical science. **The heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.** So the learned classes of the nation also declared in favor of David. V. 33. **Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war,** disciplined in keeping rank, having enjoyed more military drill than the average tribe of the nation, **with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank,** execute all maneuvers according to military lore; **they were not of double heart,** they were not double-minded, but gave their undivided allegiance to David. V. 34. **And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them with shield and spear thirty and seven thousand.** V. 35. **And of the Danites, expert in war, twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.** V. 36. **And of Asher such as went forth to battle, expert in war,** well acquainted with military drill, **forty thousand.** V. 37. **And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle,** fully fitted out with the usual equipment of soldiers, **an hundred and twenty thousand.** V. 38. **All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron,** their minds fully made up in favor of David, **to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king,** the desire was unanimous. V. 39. **And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking; for their brethren had prepared for them,** the festivities were distinguished by liberality and magnificence, as befitted the occasion, for some 339,000 men, with 1,222 chiefs and heads, were entertained. V. 40. **Moreover, they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali,** the northern parts of the country west of Jordan, **brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins,** these two fruits in the dried form, and pressed into cakes, being considered dainty additions to the average meal, **and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly; for there was joy in Israel.** Festivities also on a large scale, if conducted in the fear of the Lord, meet with His approval, while a morbid asceticism does not please Him.

CHAPTER 13.

The First Attempt to Bring the Ark to Jerusalem.

The Ark Brought from Kirjath-Jearim. — V. 1. **And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader,** this item supplementing the account in 2 Sam. 6, 1—11, where only the total number is given as having been thirty thousand. V. 2. **And David said unto all the congregation of Israel,** in its representatives, **If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord, our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere,** literally, "let us break through and send," that is, let us use all diligence, putting aside every show of hesitation, joining with all the other true believers, **that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs,** living in obscurity in the various cities allotted to them, **that they may gather themselves unto us,** v. 3. **and let us bring**

again the ark of our God to us, which, after having been returned by the Philistines to Beth-shemesh, had been brought up as far as Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. 7, 1, **for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul.** The worship of Jehovah had, in general, been neglected during the reign of Saul, the ark having been away from the Sanctuary for so many years. The more serious believers had offered their sacrifices at Gibeon, but without considering that the ark was the chief part of the Tabernacle. David, clear-sighted as usual, realized that the presence of the ark in his capital, where he intended to locate the Sanctuary, would be of great help in maintaining the worship of Jehovah in the nation. V. 4. **And all the congregation said that they would do so,** they were inspired by the fervent piety of the king; **for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people,** it met with their full approval and promise of cooperation. V. 5. **So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt,** the small stream forming the boundary between Palestine and Egypt, **even unto the entering of Hemath,** in the extreme north, in the mountain ranges of Syria, **to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.** V. 6. **And David went up and all Israel,** the great multitudes that had responded to his summons, **to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah,** a town in its western part, **to bring up thence the ark of God the Lord, that dwelleth between the cherubim,** for it was above the mercy-seat that the glory of Jehovah appeared to Moses and to His servants, Ex. 25, 22, **whose name is called on it;** for religious worship includes the act of calling on His name. V. 7. **And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab,** which lay on a hill near the city; **and Uzza and Ahio,** the sons of Abinadab, **drave the cart.** V. 8. **And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing,** with songs of rejoicing, **and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, tambourines, and with cymbals, and with trumpets,** those of the Sanctuary probably being in use. Such feasts of rejoicing in honor of the Lord are well-pleasing to Him; but all sinful elements must be carefully kept away.

The Death of Uzza. — V. 9. **And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon** (or Nachon), in all likelihood the usual floor in the open, a shelter overhead being provided in some cases, **Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled.** Cp. 2 Sam. 6, 6—11. V. 10. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the ark,** thus profaning an object which was entirely in the charge of the priests and to be handled by them only in the manner prescribed by the Lord; **and there he died before God.** The mistake really lay with the leaders of the people, who should have remembered God's order concerning the bearing of the ark, Num. 7, 9; 10, 17. V. 11. **And David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzza; wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza** ("breach of Uzza") **to this day.** V. 12. **And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?** V. 13. **So David brought not the ark home to himself to the City of David,** he did not complete the removal, **but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite,** who was one of the Levitical porters, chap. 15, 18. 24. V. 14. **And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom, in his house, three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.** The sacred thing of the New Testament is God's Word, in whatever form it may come to us. To the repentant, believing Christians this Word is a savor of life unto life, but to the unbelievers it is a savor of death unto death.

CHAPTER 14.

David's Early Success.

The Fame and the Family of David. — V. 1. **Now, Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David,** a special embassy bearing his congratulations, **and timber of cedars,** lumber in the shape of beams, **with masons and carpenters, to build him an house,** the first royal palace built in Jerusalem. V. 2. **And David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel,** this fact being brought out by the unsolicited friendship of this powerful neighboring king; **for his kingdom was lifted up on high,** the Lord having exalted him, bringing out the impression of power more fully, **because of His people Israel.** Since Jehovah had chosen Israel for His people, therefore He gave it this conspicuous, powerful position among the nations. V. 3. **And David took more wives at Jerusalem; and David begat more sons and daughters,** in addition to those born to him in Hebron. V. 4. **Now, these are the names of his children which he had in Jerusalem: Shammua and Shobab, Nathan and Solomon,** v. 5. **and Ibhar, and Elishua, and Elpalet,** v. 6. **and Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia,** v. 7. **and Elishama, and Beeliada** (or Eliada), **and Eliphalet.** Cp. 2 Sam. 3, 5; 5, 14—16. God's treatment of David, given as a reward for the king's faithfulness, was at the same time an act of His wonderful kindness and mercy, as in the case of all His children.

Defeat of the Philistines. — V. 8. **And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel,** in the eighth year of his rule, **all the Philistines went up to seek David,** to attack and overthrow him and to subdue the country. **And David heard of it and went out against them,** he prepared to meet the invaders with an armed force. V. 9. **And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the Valley of Rephaim,** favorably situated some distance west of Jerusalem and permitting the invaders to strike in every direction. V. 10. **And David enquired of God,** in the usual manner, through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, **saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? And wilt Thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto him, Go up, for I will deliver them into thine hand.** V. 11. **So they came up to Baal-perazim,** in or near the Valley of Rephaim; **and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters,** as when a dam suddenly breaks, and the accumulated waters spread death and destruction in their wake. **Therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim** ("place of breaches"). V. 12. **And when they had left their gods there,** the idols which they had foolishly brought along to assist them, **David gave a commandment,** in agreement with God's precept, Deut. 7, 5. 25, **and they were burned with fire.** V. 13. **And the Philistines yet again,** renewing their campaign the next season, **spread themselves abroad in the valley,** preparing to overrun the land. V. 14. **Therefore David enquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them,** he was not to make his attack from the front; **turn away from them,** by marching around their flank, **and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees,** literally, "over against the bacas," a shrublike balsam tree, with a white, resinous discharge, these trees shielding David and his army from observation. V. 15. **And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry-trees,** the rustling caused by a strong breeze suddenly rising, **that then thou shalt go out to battle,** in an unexpected attack upon the enemies from the rear; **for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines,** the success of the entire campaign depending upon Him. V. 16. **David therefore did as God commanded him; and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer,** these two towns being, respectively, two and one half and four and one half hours in a northwesterly direction from Jerusalem. V. 17. **And the fame of David,** in consequence of these victories, **went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.** Christ, the Son of David, is King of the New Testament Zion, and all kings and peoples that refuse to acknowledge Him as their King will have no success. The Lord blesses and strengthens the kingdom and the rule of Christ on earth.

CHAPTER 15.

The Ark Removed to Jerusalem.

List of the Chief Men Partaking. — V. 1. **And David made him houses in the City of David,** the various buildings belonging to the royal palace, **and prepared a place for the ark of God,** set aside a suitable, smooth surface, **and pitched for it a tent,** evidently after the model of the Tabernacle, which was still at Gibeon and continued to be used as a sanctuary, the altar of burnt offering remaining there till the time of Solomon, chap. 16, 39. 40; 21, 29. V. 2. **Then David,** having meanwhile received information concerning the reason for his failure, **said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites,** as the Law prescribed, Num. 4, 5. 15; 7, 9; 10, 17; **for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him forever.** David thereby acknowledged that it had been unlawful for him to carry the ark on a wagon, chap. 13, 7. V. 3. **And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem,** for the second time, **to bring up the ark of the Lord unto his place, which he had prepared for it,** in the new Tabernacle in the capital, chap. 13, 3. V. 4. **And David assembled the children of Aaron,** the two chief priests, Zadok and Abiathar, **and all the members of the priesthood, and the Levites,** all those who assisted in the offices of divine worship; v. 5. **of the sons of Kohath: Uriel, the chief, and his brethren,** that is, the near relatives in his group, **an hundred and twenty;** v. 6. **of the sons of Merari: Asaiah, the chief, and his brethren, two hundred and twenty;** v. 7. **of the sons of Gershom: Joel, the chief, and his brethren, an hundred and thirty;** v. 8. **of the sons of Elizaphan: Shemaiah, the chief, and his brethren, two hundred;** v. 9. **of the sons of Hebron: Eliel, the chief, and his brethren, fourscore:** v. 10. **of the sons of Uzziel: Amminadab, the chief, and his brethren, an hundred and twelve.** The four chiefs of the father-houses, Uriel, Shemaiah, Hebron, and Amminadab, Ex. 6, 18. 22, were to bear the ark on their shoulders, their assistants being kept busy with the various vessels of the Sanctuary and the sacred vestments. V. 11. **And David called for Zadok,** the high priest of the house of Eleazar, **and**

Abiathar, holding the same office in the line of Ithamar, **the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab,** v. 12. **and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites,** the leaders in these divisions of their tribes; **sanctify yourselves,** in the usual manner of setting themselves apart for a sacred duty, Ex. 19, 10. 15, **both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.** He did not want his efforts to come to naught a second time on account of non-observance of any prescribed forms. V. 13. **For because ye did it not at the first,** they had not carried the ark at the first attempt to remove it, three months before, **the Lord, our God, made a breach upon us,** in killing Uzza, **for that we sought Him not after the due order.** V. 14. **So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel,** in observing the rules governing its removal in every detail. V. 15. **And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord.** V. 16. **And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music,** to train musicians for the liturgical part of the services, **psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.** V. 17. **So the Levites appointed Heman, the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph, the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari, their brethren, Ethan** (or Jeduthun), **the son of Kushaiah** (or Kishi); v. 18. **and with them their brethren of the second degree,** that is, of the second rank, **Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the porters.** Now the entire band set aside for the liturgical worship was divided into sections. V. 19. **So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass,** the loudest-sounding instruments, fine for beating time; v. 20. **and Zechariah, and Aziel** (or Jaaziel), **and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries on Alamoth,** for the music for these guitarlike instruments was set in the treble clef; v. 21. **and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps on the Sheminith to excel,** literally, "on the octave to lead," for these harps or lutes carried the melody. V. 22. **And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song,** literally, "for bearing," since he seems to have held some office in connection with carrying the ark; **he instructed about the song, because he was skilful;** he was acquainted with the ritual, he knew in just what manner the bearing of the ark and the liturgical songs had to be executed. V. 23. **And Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark;** they marched immediately in front, while Obed-edom and Jeiel marched in the rear of the ark. V. 24. **And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets,** those especially prepared for that purpose, Num. 10, 8, **before the ark of God; and Obed-edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark.** Thus special festivals of the New Testament Church, particularly those connected with the worship of the Lord, may well be prepared elaborately, if only with all reverence.

The Removal Effected. — V. 25. **So David and the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands,** all the foremost men of the kingdom, **went to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.** The pomp and solemnity of the occasion, together with its evident joyous aspect, were bound to make a deep impression on the minds of all who participated and thus fill them with veneration for the ark and all it stood for. V. 26. **And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord,** so that they did not share the fate of Uzza, **that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.** Cp. 2 Sam. 6, 13. V. 27. **And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen,** with a white ephod of fine byssus such as the priests wore, **and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah, the master of the song, with the singers,** he who directed the bearing of the ark. **David also had upon him an ephod of linen,** as the king of a priestly people. V. 28. **Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps,** all the various instruments being pressed into service upon this momentous occasion. V. 29. **And it came to pass, as the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came to the City of David,** the upper city of Jerusalem, **that Michal, the daughter of Saul,** the wife of David, **looking out at a window, saw King David dancing,** in a slow and solemn individual dance, **and playing; and she despised him in her heart,** thinking that his behavior could not be reconciled with the dignity ordinarily shown by kings. This showed the smallness of her soul; it was punished by the Lord accordingly, 2 Sam. 6, 16. The true children of God sing and play to the Lord both in their hearts and in their anthems, being one heart and one soul, and are therefore not dissuaded by the mockery of the world.

CHAPTER 16.

The Festival and David's Hymn of Praise.

The Offerings and Gifts. — V. 1. **So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it. And they offered burnt sacrifices and peace-offerings before God,** both in atonement for sin and in establishing the right relation between themselves and the covenant God. V. 2. **And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord,** commending their zeal and asking the richest blessings of Jehovah upon them. V. 3. **And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread and a good piece of flesh,** a measure of wine, **and a flagon of wine,** rather, a cake of pressed grapes. V. 4. **And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord,** thereby instituting divine service in Jerusalem, **and to record,** literally, "to bring to remembrance," to pray at the meat-offering, Lev. 2, 2, **and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel:** v. 5. **Asaph, the chief,** the man in charge of the first company of musicians, and **next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom; and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps,** these being the members of the second company of Tabernacle musicians; **but Asaph made a sound with cymbals;** v. 6. **Benaiah also and Jahaziel, the priests, with trumpets continually before the Ark of the Covenant of God,** to announce certain festivals and seasons, as well as the divisions of the psalms in the liturgical part of the Temple worship. An elaborate liturgy may well be reconciled with true piety of heart.

David's Psalm of Praise. — V. 7. **Then, on that day, David delivered first this psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren,** for use in the public worship at the Tabernacle (the hymn, as here recorded, is almost identical with Ps. 96; cp. also Ps. 105, 1—15; 106, 47. 48): v. 8. **Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name,** in acknowledgment of His Godhead, **make known His deeds among the people.** V. 9. **Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, talk ye of all His wondrous works.** V. 10. **Glory ye in His holy name,** in proud praise; **let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.** V. 11. **Seek the Lord and His strength,** in firm trust and confidence; **seek His face continually.** So this first strophe is a summons to praise the Lord and to seek His face. V. 12. **Remember His marvelous works that He hath done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,** in dealing justly both with His own people and with His enemies, v. 13. **O ye seed of Israel, His servant, ye children of Jacob, His chosen ones.** V. 14. **He is the Lord, our God; His judgments are in all the earth,** unmistakably plain to every one that cares to see them, the strophe being a summons to consider the Lord's ways and judgments. V. 15. **Be ye mindful always of His covenant, the Word which He commanded to a thousand generations,** as it was given from Mount Sinai and, before that, to the patriarchs; v. 16. **even of the covenant which He made with Abraham, and of His oath unto Isaac;** v. 17. **and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,** v. 18. **saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance** (there is a Messianic element in these lines, and the entire strophe is a summons to keep His wonderful covenant in mind, to trust in the Messiah and His work), v. 19. **when ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it,** namely, the families of the patriarchs. V. 20. **And when they went from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another people,** as in the journeys of Abraham and Isaac to Philistia and Egypt, and that of Jacob to Mesopotamia, v. 21. **He suffered no man to do them wrong,** as the history of each of the patriarchs shows; **yea, He reproved kings for their sakes,** Gen. 12, 17; 20, 3, v. 22. **saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm;** for every one of the patriarchs was, at the same time, a prophet of Jehovah, and the remembrance of the Lord's protection afforded to their fathers was to keep the descendants in the fear of Jehovah. V. 23. **Sing unto the Lord, all the earth,** His praise should not be confined to the children of Israel; **show forth from day to day His salvation,** the deliverance wrought through the Messiah. V. 24. **Declare His glory among the heathen, His marvelous works among all nations;** for the missionary spirit has actuated the believers of all times. V. 25. **For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; He also is to be feared above all gods,** everthing that bears that name. V. 26. **For all the gods of the people,** of the heathen nations far and wide, **are idols,** literally, "vanities, nothingnesses"; **but the Lord made the heavens.** V. 27. **Glory and honor are in His presence; strength and gladness are in His place,** strength and beauty in His Sanctuary, for which reason all the world should join in the praise of His greatness. V. 28. **Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.** V. 29. **Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; bring an offering, and come before Him; worship the Lord in the beauty of**

holiness, in a manner harmonizing with the majesty of His holiness. V. 30. **Fear before Him, all the earth**, in the veneration due to His glorious Godhead; **the world also shall be stable**, firmly established, **that it be not moved.** V. 31. **Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth**, this being the message which the believers of all times are to bring to all men. V. 32. **Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein**, the very forces of inanimate nature being appealed to in properly picturing the glory of the Lord. V. 33. **Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because He cometh to judge the earth**, and even the inanimate things of creation will exult before His coming to Judgment, since it will result in their being delivered from the bondage of sin, Rom. 8. V. 34. **O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever**, this again being a summons addressed to the believers in particular. V. 35. **And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to Thy holy name, and glory in Thy praise**, for the elect of the Lord will be assembled from every nation and tongue and people. V. 36. **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel forever and ever.** The same doxology is found at the close of the fourth book of the Psalter, Ps. 116, 48. **And all the people**, signifying their glad assent to the entire hymn in all its parts, just as believers do to-day, **said, Amen, and praised the Lord.**

The Ministers of the Sanctuary Appointed. — V. 37. **So he left there before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord**, in the Tabernacle at Jerusalem, **Asaph and his brethren to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required**, according to the arrangement which David made about the services; v. 38. **and Obed-edom with their brethren, threescore and eight; Obed-edom also, the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah to be porters**, keepers of the door, in charge of the proper opening and closing; v. 39. **and Zadok, the priest, and his brethren, the priests, before the Tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon**, which remained a sanctuary until the time of Solomon, v. 40. **to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt offering**, which remained at Gibeon, **continually morning and evening**, as the Law required, **and to do according to all that is written in the Law of the Lord which He commanded Israel**, Num. 28; v. 41. **and with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name**, chap. 15, 17—21, **to give thanks to the Lord, because His mercy endureth forever**; v. 42. **and with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound**, that is, for loud sounding, to give signals that might be heard even at a distance, **and with musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun were porters**, they were appointed to guard the entrance of the Tabernacle at Gibeon. V. 43. **And all the people**, the festival being ended, **departed, every man to his house. And David returned to bless his house**, as he had before blessed the assembled congregation in the name of Jehovah. By means of this carefully ordered division of the work the services of the Lord were always edifying and interesting — a fine example to the believers of the New Testament as well.

CHAPTER 17.

David Receives a Messianic Promise.

David Forbidden to Build God a House. — V. 1. **Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house**, after his victories had given him a period of comparative quiet, **that David said to Nathan, the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars**, the fine royal palace which the friendly bounty of King Hiram had made possible, **but the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.** The thought that he was more comfortably and splendidly housed than the ark seemed unnatural, contradictory, to him; his idea and purpose was to erect a temple to the true God. V. 2. **Then Nathan**, giving merely his own opinion, not the revealed will of the Lord, **said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee.** To his merely human judgment the plan of David seemed very good. V. 3. **And it came to pass the same night that the word of God came to Nathan**, in a direct revelation, **saying**, v. 4. **Go and tell David, My servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in**; v. 5. **for I have not dwelt in an house**, in a building of solid construction, **since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent and from one tabernacle to another**; for the Tabernacle had been put up in a great number of places since it had first been constructed, and its curtains and coverings had undoubtedly been replaced several times, due to ravages of time and ordinary wear and tear. V. 6. **Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the Judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed**, to take care of and rule, **My people, saying, Why**

have ye not built Me an house of cedars? V. 7. **Now, therefore, thus shalt thou say unto My servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts,** the great Jehovah Sabaoth, **I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep,** from the lowly life of a humble shepherd, **that thou shouldest be ruler over My people Israel;** v. 8. **and I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked,** a God not confined to a single habitation, but with His children at all times and in all places, **and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth,** His unmerited blessings had attended David's entire career. V. 9. **Also, I will ordain a place for My people Israel, and will plant them,** give them a sure and abiding place of habitation, **and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning,** v. 10. **and since the time that I commanded Judges to be over My people Israel,** including the whole period from Joshua to Saul. **Moreover, I will subdue all thine enemies.** All that David and Israel had they owed to the mercy of the Lord. Even so God, in the Gospel, gives all spiritual gifts to men without any merit and worthiness in them, expecting, in return, only that men will use His blessings with proper thanksgiving.

David Accepts God's Promises with Thankfulness. — V. 10c. **Furthermore I tell thee that the Lord will build thee an house.** (Cp. with the entire passage 2 Sam. 7, 12—29, and note that the peculiarity of prophecy to combine thoughts near at hand with those afar off is very marked in this paragraph.) V. 11. **And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers,** to await the great resurrection of the dead, **that I will raise up thy Seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish His kingdom.** The nearest reference is probably that concerning Solomon, but the Messianic idea comes out more strongly as the announcement progresses. V. 12. **He shall build Me an house, and I will stablish His throne forever.** The thought clearly looks forward to the house of the Church, the kingdom of the Messiah, and not only to the building of the Temple. V. 13. **I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son. And I will not take My mercy away from Him as I took it away from him that was before thee,** Saul having been rejected on account of his disobedience; v. 14. **but I will settle Him in Mine house and in My kingdom forever; and His throne shall be established forevermore,** not only through the nearest line of David's posterity, but, in the person of his greatest Son, to all eternity. V. 15. **According to all these words and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.** V. 16. **And David the king came and sat before the Lord,** in the Tabernacle erected by him, **over against the ark, and said,** realizing that the Lord's promise went far beyond a mere promise of establishing a dynasty, **Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?** Cp. 2 Sam. 7, 18—29. V. 17. **And yet this,** all the temporal blessings which had been given to him from his early youth, **was a small thing in Thine eyes, O God; for Thou hast also spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God.** The exact text may here be rendered: "Thou hast let me see what Thou hast determined concerning a man who out of the height is Jehovah God." It was the greatness of this honor which caused such unusual expressions of humility on the part of David, the fact that his house was to be the bearer of the Messianic blessing. V. 18. **What can David speak more to Thee for the honor of Thy servant? For Thou knowest Thy servant.** God knew that David in himself was utterly unworthy of the honor bestowed upon him, but He vouchsafed it out of pure grace. V. 19. **O Lord, for Thy servant's sake and according to Thine own heart hast Thou done all this greatness, in making known all these great things.** The entire matter, therefore, redounded to the glory of God alone. V. 20. **O Lord, there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.** To this conclusion and confession David was driven by the consideration of God's unparalleled mercy. V. 21. **And what one nation in the earth is like Thy people Israel,** including the spiritual Israel of God's people of all times, **whom God went to redeem to be His own people, to make Thee a name of greatness and terribleness,** one which would be feared by the enemies, **by driving out nations from before Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?** The deliverance from the bondage of Egypt has always been a picture of the greater deliverance and salvation of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. V. 22. **For Thy people Israel didst Thou make Thine own people forever; and Thou, Lord, becamest their God,** the spiritual Israel, the Church of God, holding this same truth to this day. V. 23. **Therefore, now, Lord, let the thing that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning his house,** the wonderful Messianic promise, **be established forever, and do as Thou hast said.** V. 24. **Let it even be established that Thy name may be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and let the house of David, Thy servant, be**

established before Thee. V. 25. For Thou, O my God, hast told Thy servant, literally, "opened the ears of Thy servant," that Thou wilt build him an house, the fact that chiefly a spiritual temple is meant again standing out here; therefore Thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before Thee. V. 26. And now, Lord, Thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto Thy servant; v. 27. now, therefore, let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant that it may be before Thee forever; for Thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever. Cp. Ps. 33, 9. The temple to which reference is chiefly, if not exclusively, made, is that of the Christian Church, of the communion of saints. The Church is a habitation of God through the Spirit, it is the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Lord Himself lives and rules in this kingdom throughout eternity, and all His saints, who have here tasted His mercy, will there partake of His glory, world without end.

CHAPTER 18.

Some of David's Wars.

War with the Philistines, Moabites, and Syrians. — V. 1. Now, after this it came to pass that David smote the Philistines, over whom he had already gained two victories, chap. 14, 8—16, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns, one of the five Philistine city-states, out of the hands of the Philistines. V. 2. And he smote Moab, the heathen nation southeast of the Dead Sea; and the Moabites became David's servants, his tributary vassals, and brought gifts. Cp. 2 Sam. 8, 1. 2. V. 3. And David smote Hadarezer (or Hadadezer), king of Zobah, unto, rather, toward, Hamath, his territory lying north or northeast of Damascus, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates, in an effort to get the supremacy of the Syrian states. V. 4. And David took from him a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand footmen. The apparent discrepancy between this statement and that of 2 Sam. 8, 4 is due to the fact that in the latter passage the Hebrew text is a trifle corrupt. David also houghed all the chariot horses, by hamstringing them, but reserved of them an hundred chariots, probably for a triumphal procession upon his return. V. 5. And when the Syrians of Damascus, who now held the supremacy in the Syrian countries, came to help Hadarezer, king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians, in defeating their army utterly, two and twenty thousand men. V. 6. Then David put garrisons in Syria-damascus, as in a tributary country. And the Syrians became David's servants and brought gifts, regular tribute money. Thus the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. V. 7. And David took the shields, the arms or equipments, of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, with which his soldiers were equipped, and brought them to Jerusalem, into the treasury of the Sanctuary. V. 8. Likewise from Tibbath (probably Tebah) and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, towns through which the main caravan road to the Euphrates ran, brought David very much brass, wherewith Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass, 1 Kings 7, 15. 23. Thus the kingdom of David was extended as far as the Euphrates, because the Lord was with him. Even so the believers prosper under God's blessings in all that His goodness bestows upon them.

The Edomites Subdued. — V. 9. Now, when Tou, king of Hamath, a province in the extreme north, on the Orontes, heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer, king of Zobah, v. 10. he sent Hadoram (or Joram), his son, to King David, to enquire of his welfare, with the usual greeting of peace, and to congratulate him, with the blessings of good wishes, because he had fought against Hadarezer and smitten him, (for Hadarezer, desiring the supremacy over the entire surrounding country, had war with Tou, a state of war existed between them,) and with him all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass, in token of his friendship and esteem. V. 11. Them also King David dedicated unto the Lord, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all these nations, set aside for the use of the Lord in the treasury of the Sanctuary: from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, whose territory was northeast of the Dead Sea, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek, whom he had overthrown after they had plundered Ziklag in his absence, 1 Sam. 30. V. 12. Moreover, Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, slew of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, at the southwestern end of the Dead Sea, eighteen thousand. They had ventured an attack upon Judah in the absence of David, while he was in the north, but were decisively defeated before they had done any harm. V. 13. And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants, his tributary vassals. Cp. 2 Sam. 8, 14. Thus the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. V. 14. So David, in consequence of all these successful wars, reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment, in deciding all matters brought before him, and justice, in sentencing the unjust, among all his people. V. 15. And Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was

over the host, the commander-in-chief of the army; **and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, recorder,** chancellor of the kingdom. V. 16. **And Zadok, the son of Ahitub,** of the line of Eleazar, **and Abimelech, the son of Abiathar,** of Ithamar's line, **were the priests; and Shavsha** (or Seraiah) **was scribe,** secretary of state; v. 17. **and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites,** the body-guard of the king; **and the sons of David were chief about the king,** his privy councilors, 2 Sam. 8, 18. David is a type and example for all believers. Like him, they work and battle all their lives for the extension of the kingdom of Jesus, serving Him gladly with body and soul.

CHAPTER 19.

Defeat of the Ammonites and the Syrians.

David's Messenger's Shamefully Treated. V. 1. **Now it came to pass after this,** the exact time not being given, but supposedly soon after the wars just described, **that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, died,** the same one who had been defeated by Saul, 1 Sam. 11, but had somehow lived in friendship with David, **and his son reigned in his stead.** V. 2. **And David said,** either in his council or in deliberating the matter with himself, **I will show kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me,** at some time during David's exile, while Saul was seeking his life. **And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father,** to express the cordial sympathy of a neighboring ruler, as custom required. **So the servants of David,** his official ambassadors, **came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun to comfort him,** to transmit David's message of condolence to him. V. 3. **But the princes of the children of Ammon,** the king's chief advisers, **said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father,** the emphasis being upon this honoring, the sincerity of which the courtiers questioned, **that he hath sent comforters unto thee? Are not his servants come unto thee for to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?** They falsely ascribed such base motives to David and to his ambassadors, as though they were making this visit merely a pretext, their real object being a careful examination of the city and its fortifications, for the purpose of taking it. V. 4. **Wherefore Hanun took David's servants,** although they were his personal representatives, **and shaved them,** that is, the one side of their beard, a mocking disfigurement, 2 Sam. 10, 4, **and cut off their garments in the midst hard by their buttocks, and sent them away,** thus heaping one of the grossest insults upon them which the Oriental mind can conceive of. V. 5. **Then there went certain and told David how the men were served,** for they themselves were too deeply disgraced to appear in public. **And he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown,** Jericho being the first city on the west side of the river to be reached by them, **and then return,** namely, to Jerusalem; for it was only then that they could with propriety return to court. Many a person has been seriously harmed in his good name by the foolish suspicions cast upon him by evil-thinking men.

Defeat of the Ammonites. — V. 6. **And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David,** that they were a stench in his nostrils on account of their unprovoked treatment of his ambassadors, **Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver** (almost $2,000,000) **to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia,** beyond the Euphrates, **and out of Syria-maachah,** north of Gilead and Bozrah, in the country east of Jordan, **and out of Zobah,** north or northeast of Damascus. V. 7. **So they,** the representatives of the Ammonites, **hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people, who came and pitched before Medeba,** a city of the tribe of Reuben, about nine miles southeast of Heshbon. The mercenary troops were such as could fight on horseback as well as in chariots, experienced in both forms of battle. **And the children of Ammon,** whose territory was somewhat farther to the east, **gathered themselves together from their cities and came to battle,** ready either for defensive or offensive work. V. 8. **And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men,** the entire army of Israel's military forces. V. 9. **And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array before the gate of the city,** before their capital, Rabbah, the forts of the city thus serving to cover their rear. **And the kings that were come were by themselves in the field;** the mercenaries did not effect a union with the army of the Ammonites, but prepared to attack the forces of Israel from the north, from the flank or the rear. V. 10. **Now, when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind,** the Ammonites facing him, and the Syrians threatening him from the rear, **he chose out of all the choice of Israel,** from the number of the most valiant veterans, **and put them in array against the Syrians,** the more numerous and formidable enemies. V. 11. **And the rest of the people,** the remainder of his army, **he de-**

livered unto the hand of Abishai, his brother, and they set themselves in array, they arranged themselves in battle order, **against the children of Ammon,** the weaker foe. V. 12. **And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will help thee,** thus arranging for mutual assistance. V. 13. **Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people,** for very much depends upon the attitude of the leader in all great crises, **and for the cities of our God,** which would have been in danger of capture and destruction in case the enemies had gained the victory; **and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight.** This is the trust which should characterize all Christians. After they have done all that is in their power, and if they are straining all their strength, they may leave the success of their efforts to the Lord in prayerful confidence. V. 14. **So Joab and the people that were with him drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and they fled before him.** V. 15. **And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, his brother, and entered into the city,** they took refuge behind the strong walls of their capital, Rabbah. **Then Joab came to Jerusalem,** reserving the capture of the Ammonite capital for a later season. It is an easy matter for the Lord to grant the victory to the weaker side if thereby His plans are promoted.

The Syrians Overthrown. — V. 16. **And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers and drew forth the Syrians that were beyond the river,** those from Mesopotamia proper, who had not come down for this campaign; **and Shophach** (or Shobach), **the captain of the host of Hadarezer, went before them,** as commander-in-chief of the united Syrian forces. V. 17. **And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel,** the entire military forces of his realm, **and passed over Jordan, and came upon them,** evidently as they were approaching to attack him, **and set the battle in array against them.** This was at Helam, 2 Sam. 10, 16. 17. **So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him.** V. 18. **But the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven thousand men which fought in chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach, the captain of the host.** In combining this account with that of 2 Sam. 10, 18, we have the total list of those destroyed: 7,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 40,000 footmen. V. 19. **And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel,** that they were utterly defeated, having no chance to stand up before David's men, **they made peace with David and became his servants,** tributary vassals once more; **neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.** Thus the Lord crowns the labor of His believers with success, He lets their battles result in victory, all for the honor of His name, even if the spiritual victories are not always apparent to human eyes.

CHAPTER 20.

Feats of David's Army and of His Heroes.

The City of Rabbah Taken. — V. 1. **And it came to pass that after the year was expired,** at the season when warlike operations were usually resumed, **at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab led forth the power of the army,** the flower of his veteran troops, **and wasted the country of the children of Ammon,** thus chastizing the Ammonites for their wilful outrage on the Hebrew ambassadors, **and came and besieged Rabbah,** the most powerful fortress in the country. **But David tarried at Jerusalem,** coming over only after Joab had taken the lower town, and himself directing the storming of the citadel, 2 Sam. 12, 26. **And Joab smote Rabbah and destroyed it,** David being present only in the last part of the campaign. V. 2. **And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold** (roughly, equal to one hundred and twenty-five pounds); **and there were precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head,** not permanently, but only to signify the subjection of the Ammonites. **And he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city.** V. 3. **And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws and with harrows of iron,** threshing-carts, **and with axes,** probably scythelike cutting instruments. The method of dealing with vanquished foes seems barbarous at this time, but was undoubtedly well deserved. **Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon,** his purpose being a complete overthrow of these ancient enemies of Israel. **And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.** What the Ammonites experienced has happened time and again in the course of history, namely, that people brought only misfortune upon themselves, especially in attempting to battle against the Lord and His Church.

Exploits of Individual Heroes. — V. 4. **And it came to pass after this that there arose war at Gezer,** it was rekindled, like a fire that has been smoldering, **with the Philistines,** Gezer being on their northern boundary, in the tribe of Ephraim; **at which time Sibbechai**

the Hushathite slew Sippai (or Saph), **that was of the children of the giant**, belonging to the Rephaim, the last remnant of the former giant race in this country; **and they were subdued.** V. 5. **And there was war again with the Philistines**, another uprising; **and Elhanan, the son of Jair** (or Jaare-oregim), **slew Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear-staff was like a weaver's beam.** V. 6. **And yet again there was war at Gath**, in the Philistine country proper, **where was a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand and six on each foot; and he also was the son of the giant**, he, too, belonged to this giant race. V. 7. **But when he defied Israel**, reproached and challenged the host of the Lord, **Jonathan, the son of Shimea, David's brother, slew him.** V. 8. **These were born unto the giant in Gath**, the last of the giant family; **and they fell by the hand of David**, that is, while he was supreme military chief, although he personally slew Goliath, **and by the hand of his servants.** The story is typical of the fate which comes upon those who oppose the rule of the great Son of David, Jesus Christ, for they will, if not in this life, eventually receive their punishment, everlasting destruction, by their own fault.

CHAPTER 21.

The Census of the Nation.

David's Sin and Its Consequences. — V. 1. **And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.** From the parallel passage, 2 Sam. 24, 1, we learn that this was due to the fact that the Lord at this time withdrew His grace from David, and permitted the Tempter to prevail over him. V. 2. **And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba**, on the extreme southern boundary, **even to Dan**, in the extreme north, **and bring the number of them to me that I may know it.** While the taking of a census in itself was not sinful, the one contemplated by David was the work of proud boastfulness and wicked haughtiness, an overemphasizing of his political power. V. 3. **And Joab answered**, realizing that the king's motive was not pure, **The Lord make His people an hundred times so many more as they be; but, my lord, the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why, then, doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?** Joab wisely tried to keep David from transgression, whether it was merely due to an attack of pride, or whether he contemplated some tyrannical innovation. V. 4. **Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab**, he insisted upon having his will carried out. **Wherefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.** Cp. 2 Sam. 24, 5—8. It is expressly stated that Joab did not finish his work, nor was the total number put in the account of the chronicles of King David, chap. 27, 24. V. 5. **And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword; and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.** The apparent discrepancy between this passage and 2 Sam. 24, 9 is due to the fact that this later account includes all those who would be available in war, while the other evidently speaks only of such as had had training in war. V. 6. **But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab.** It seems that the tribe of Benjamin would have been the last to be numbered, and that Joab, before visiting this territory, after his circuit trip through the country, returned to Jerusalem, where his disgust finally had some influence in causing David to change his mind. V. 7. **And God was displeased with this thing**, the entire proceeding was evil in His eyes; **therefore He smote Israel**, the manner in which His anger took effect on Israel being described below. V. 8. **And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing; but now, I beseech Thee, do away**, that is, forgive, **the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.** It was a full and free confession of sin, which, as usual, however, did not eliminate the punishment that was bound to follow. V. 9. **And the Lord**, in answering David's confession of sin, **spake unto Gad, David's seer**, Nathan apparently having died before this, **saying**, v. 10. **Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things**, laying them out for the king's choice; **choose thee one of them that I may do it unto thee.** V. 11. **So Gad came to David and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Choose thee**, making his choice of one of the three, v. 12. **either three years' famine, or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee**, persecuted by his enemies and his men slain all around him, **or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel.** Any one of these three forms of punishment was bound to show David his utter helplessness, his entire dependence upon God for everything pertaining to his rule, and the foolishness of pride.

Now, therefore, advise thyself what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me. V. 13. **And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait,** the entire matter now oppressed him severely. **Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for very great are His mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of men.** Experience had taught David that human passion and desire for vengeance has no bounds, while the wise and gracious Father in heaven knows the kind, and regulates the amount, of punishment as every one of His children needs it and can bear it. V. 14. **So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.** V. 15. **And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it,** to let the ravages of the disease take their toll here; **and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and He repented Him of the evil,** spoken according to the way men look at matters, **and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough; stay now thine hand.** To this day we have no explanation for the virulence of certain epidemics but that of a special visitation of the Lord. **And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan** (or Araunah) **the Jebusite,** one of the surviving members of that nation, who had accepted the God of Israel. V. 16. **And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven,** made visible to him by the Lord, **having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth,** as a sign of deep mourning and repentance, **fell upon their faces,** in terror and supplication. V. 17. **And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed,** in causing the census to be taken with such a sinful motive; **but as for these sheep,** the great mass of the people, **what have they done?** His interest in his subjects was that of a true and faithful ruler, who is filled with sympathy for all their misfortunes. **Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Lord, my God, be on me and on my father's house, but not on Thy people, that they should be plagued.** This is a fine example of an unselfish intercession. Note also how severely God hates sin in every form, and how seriously He punishes it at times.

The Sacrifice on Ornan's Threshing-Floor. — V. 18. **Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite,** this being located on the summit of what was afterward known as Mount Zion, the place where the Temple was built. V. 19. **And David went up at the saying of Gad which he spake in the name of the Lord.** V. 20. **And Ornan turned back,** he turned around while busy with his work, **and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now, Ornan was threshing wheat,** on an open threshing-floor, as is the custom in the Orient. V. 21. **And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground,** showing his sovereign all proper respect according to the Fourth Commandment. V. 22. **And David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing-floor,** he needed the entire area for what he had in mind, **that I may build an altar therein unto the Lord. Thou shalt grant it me for the full price that the plague may be stayed from the people.** V. 23. **And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes,** this offer agreeing with the Oriental custom of doing business; **lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt offerings, and the threshing-instruments,** the rough sledge with its rollers, **for wood, and the wheat for the meat-offering; I give it all.** Ornan was anxious to have the plague stayed as soon as possible, and so his offer was made for instant use. V. 24. **And King David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price; for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.** It was David's transgression, and he wanted to bear the full expense of the sacrifice. V. 25. **So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight** (almost $6,000), paying fifty shekels of silver for the cattle and the threshing-sledge alone, 2 Sam. 24, 24. V. 26. **And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings,** both in atonement for his sin and to restore the proper fellowship with the Lord, **and called upon the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.** Cp. Lev. 9, 24; 1 Kings 18, 21—23; 2 Kings 1, 12. V. 27. **And the Lord commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof,** thus staying the plague. V. 28. **At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there,** brought offerings of thanksgiving and dedicated this spot to the Lord, the Temple being erected there afterward. V. 29. **For the Tabernacle of the Lord which Moses made in the wilderness and the altar of the burnt offering were at that season in the high place at Gibeon,** chap. 16, 39, and one of the high priests officiated there until after the dedication of Solomon's Temple. V. 30. **But David could not go before it to en-**

quire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the Lord; the appearance of the angel and the great toll of the slain had left an impression of awful holiness of the place where the Lord usually revealed Himself. Note: The believers of the New Testament have a better sacrifice of atonement than that of David; for the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sins, takes away the guilt of our transgressions, and stays the plague of eternal damnation.

CHAPTER 22.

David's Provisions for Building the Temple.

Material and Money Gathered by David. V. 1. **Then David said, This is the house of the Lord God,** he selected the threshing-floor of Ornan as the site for the Temple, **and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.** The miraculous sign of the fire from heaven was to David an indication that the Lord wanted the national place of worship erected at this place. V. 2. **And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel,** partly descendants of the former Canaanite nations, partly war captives, as all these people were to be laborers in building the projected Temple; **and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.** V. 3. **And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates and for the joinings, for braces and angle-irons; and brass in abundance without weight,** all that he had brought to Jerusalem as the plunder of his wars, chap. 18, 8; v. 4. **also cedar-trees in abundance; for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar-wood to David,** first as an ordinary article of commerce, later by contract, to furnish lumber for building the Temple. V. 5. **And David said, Solomon, my son, is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord** must be exceeding magnifical, great above measure, above comparison, **of fame and of glory throughout all countries,** tending to establish and to spread the glory of the Lord wherever men would hear of it; **I will therefore now make preparation for it,** in providing materials in both lumber and metals for the construction of the Temple. **So David prepared abundantly before his death.** All of which should encourage and stimulate the believers of the New Testament to sacrifice freely for the spread of the kingdom of Christ.

David's Instructions to Solomon. — V. 6. **Then he called for Solomon, his son,** while he was still in possession of all his faculties, **and charged him,** with all earnestness and solemnity, **to build an house for the Lord God of Israel.** V. 7. **And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord, my God;** he emphasizes this point as one of the supreme desires of his life, the one great unfulfilled wish of his career; v. 8. **but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build an house unto My name because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in My sight.** Cp. chap. 28, 3; 1 Kings 5, 3. V. 9. **Behold, a son shall be born to thee who shall be a man of rest,** not chiefly a warrior, as David had been; **and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon** ("peaceful"), **and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.** V. 10. **He shall build an house for My name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.** Here the prophecy of 2 Sam. 7, 12—14 is taken in its narrower sense, although the Messianic element is not wanting. V. 11. **Now, my son, the Lord be with thee, and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord, thy God, as He hath said of thee.** It was a sacred duty which was hereby laid upon Solomon as David's heir and successor. V. 12. **Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding,** both the right knowledge and the faculty to apply it properly, **and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the Law of the Lord, thy God,** as the leader of the people also in this respect. V. 13. **Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel,** not only the special precepts of the covenant, but also those pertaining to the general duties toward all mankind. **Be strong and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.** Since the undertaking was to be made to the glory of God alone, therefore the trust of Solomon was to be placed in Him with steadfast faith, and he was to be confident of success. V. 14. **Now, behold, in my trouble,** in spite of the fact that the wars in which he was engaged often interfered with his pet hope and desire, **I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold and a thousand thousand talents of silver,** the total sum being estimated between two and four billions of dollars, **and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance,** largely taken from people whom he had conquered and from cities which he had sacked. **Timber also and stone have I prepared;**

and thou mayest add thereto. V. 15. Moreover, there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, both masons and carpenters, all selected chiefly from the conquered people living in the midst of Israel, v. 2, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. V. 16. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron there is no number; the amounts were so incredibly large that ordinary methods of keeping track of the mass were inadequate. Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee! Solomon was even now to make his plans and to estimate the costs of the entire building with all its equipment. V. 17. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon, his son, saying, v. 18. Is not the Lord, your God, with you? And hath He not given you rest on every side? For He hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the Lord and before His people, and therefore the remembrance of all God's former grace was the chief reason for this urgent invitation. V. 19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord, your God, that being the basis of a Christian life in all true believers. Arise, therefore, and build ye the Sanctuary of the Lord God to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord. With this same zeal to inspire them, the believers of the New Testament will make it the object of their lives to build the Lord's temple, the Church of Christ, to the glory of God's holy name.

CHAPTER 23.

Division and Office of the Levites.

The Levites Divided into Three Courses. V. 1. So when David was old and full of days, weary of his strenuous life, 1 Kings 1, 32—48, he made Solomon, his son, king over Israel. V. 2. And he gathered together all the princes of Israel with the priests and the Levites, the princes acting as the representatives of the tribes in taking the census of the Levites as now described. V. 3. Now, the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward, this being the age at which they did the work of their ministry according to the precept of Moses, Num. 4; and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand, v. 4. of which twenty and four thousand were to set forward, that is, oversee, the work of the house of the Lord, the more menial tasks being assigned to the Nethinim and other servants; and six thousand were officers and judges, occupying civil and judicial offices in the nation. V. 5. Moreover, four thousand were porters, in charge of the entrance gates, both as to opening and closing them and as to maintaining order; and four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith, which were used to accompany the liturgical singing in the divine worship. V. 6. And David divided them into courses, large divisions, among the sons of Levi, namely, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. V. 7. Of the Gershonites were Laadan and Shimei. V. 8. The sons of Laadan: the chief was Jehiel and Zetham and Joel, three. V. 9. The sons of Shimei: Shelomith and Haziel and Haran, three. These were the chief of the fathers of Laadan. V. 10. And the sons of Shimei were Jahath, Zina (or Zizah), and Jeush, and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei. V. 11. And Jahath was the chief and Zizah the second. But Jeush and Beriah had not many sons, their descendants being numerically weak; therefore they were in one reckoning, considered as one division, according to their father's house. The total number of father-houses among the Gershonites, therefore, was nine, six descended from Laadan and three from Shimei. V. 12. The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four, Ex. 6, 18. V. 13. The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was separated that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the Lord, Ex. 30, 7, to minister unto Him, Deut. 21, 5, and to bless in His name forever, Num. 6, 23. These were exclusively priestly functions. V. 14. Now, concerning Moses, the man of God, his sons were named of the tribe of Levi, being reckoned among the simple Levites and not among the priests. V. 15. The sons of Moses were Gershom and Eliezer. V. 16. Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel (or Shubael) was the chief. V. 17. And the sons of Eliezer were Rehabiah, the chief, the first and only one. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many, he had a very numerous posterity. V. 18. Of the sons of Izhar: Shelomith, the chief. V. 19. Of the sons of Hebron: Jeriah, the first; Amariah, the second; Jahaziel, the third; and Jekameam, the fourth. V. 20. Of the sons of Uzziel: Micah, the first, and Jesiah, the second. So the total number of father-houses among the descendants of Kohath was nine. V. 21. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. V. 22. And Eleazar died and had no sons, but daughters; and their brethren, that is, cousins, the sons of Kish, took them. V. 23.

The sons of Mushi: Mahli and Eder and Jeremoth, three. So the number of father-houses among the descendants of Merari was six and the total number among the Levites twenty-four. They were selected, and their families were increased, by the blessing of God.

The Ministry of the Levites. — V. 24. These were the sons of Levi after the house of their fathers; even the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of the Lord, from the age of twenty years and upward, the lower age here referred to being explained in the following words. V. 25. For David said, The Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto His people that they may dwell, or, "and He dwells," in Jerusalem forever, this city having now been chosen by God for the central Sanctuary; v. 26. and also unto the Levites; they shall no more carry the Tabernacle nor any vessels of it for the service thereof, and the work thus being lighter, the age at which the Levites could enter upon their work was placed lower. V. 27. For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above, v. 28. because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in assisting the priests, in the courts, and in the chambers, in keeping every part of the Temple clean, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God, attending to all the external features of the service; v. 29. both for the showbread, in helping to prepare it, and for the fine flour for meat-offering, and for the unleavened cakes, Lev. 2, 4, and for that which is baked in the pan, Lev. 2, 5, and for that which is fried, Lev. 6, 14, and for all manner of measure and size, the measures of capacity and length, principally for measuring flour, oil, and wine; v. 30. and to stand every morning, namely, the four thousand detailed for this liturgical service, to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even; v. 31. and to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the Sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, for they had to provide the necessary number of sacrificial animals, examine their fitness, attend to their slaughtering and flaying, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the Lord; v. 32. and that they should keep the charge of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, Num. 18, 4, and the charge of the Holy Place, of all the holy things connected with the worship, Num. 18, 5, and the charge of the sons of Aaron, their brethren, the care of all the things commanded them by the priests, in the service of the house of the Lord. Our God is a God of order, and it pleases Him if all the matters pertaining to external worship also are regulated properly, given into charge of certain people, to avoid all clashing.

CHAPTER 24.

Further Regulations Concerning the Sons of Levi.

The Divisions of the Priests. — V. 1. Now, these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Lev. 10, 1. 6. V. 2. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, when they attempted to bring sacrifices which were not commanded by the Lord, Num. 3, 4, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. V. 3. And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons, that is, of the line, of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons, that is, of the line, of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service. V. 4. And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar, in whose line the high priest's office should have remained alone, than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers, a total of tweny-four father-houses. V. 5. Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another, the lots being drawn alternately for one line and then for the other, in order to eliminate all appearance of favoritism; for the governors of the Sanctuary and governors of the house of God were of the sons of Eleazar and of the sons of Ithamar. V. 6. And Shemaiah, the son of Nethaneel, the scribe, one of the Levites, wrote them before the king, and the princes, and Zadok, the priest, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, and before the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, one principal household, or father-house, being taken for Eleazar and one taken for Ithamar. The lots were drawn in such a manner as to have two lots of Eleazar to one of Ithamar, the classes being noted down as they were drawn from the urn. V. 7. Now, the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, v. 8. the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, v. 9. the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, v. 10. the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, v. 11. the ninth to Jeshuah, the tenth to Shecaniah, v. 12. the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, v. 13. the thirteenth to Huppah,

the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, v. 14. the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, v. 15. the seventeenth to Hezer, the eighteenth to Aphses, v. 16. the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel, v. 17. the one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul, v. 18. the three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah. V. 19. These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the Lord, according to their manner, under Aaron, their father, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him, these orders being continued even after the exile, as in the case of Zechariah. For their antiquity, cp. Ezek. 8, 16—18; Neh. 12, 1—7. 12—21.

Genealogy of the Rest of Levi's Sons. — V. 20. And the rest of the sons of Levi were these, those that remained after the enumeration of the priests: Of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. V. 21. Concerning Rehabiah: Of the sons of Rehabiah the first was Isshiah, chap. 23, 17; v. 22. of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath; v. 23. and the sons of Hebron, chap. 23, 19: Jeriah, the first; Amariah, the second; Jahaziel, the third; Jekameam, the fourth; v. 24. of the sons of Uzziel, Michah; of the sons of Michah, Shamir. V. 25. The brother of Michah was Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. V. 26. The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi, chap. 23, 21; the sons of Jaaziah, Beno; v. 27. the sons of Merari by Jaaziah, Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. V. 28. Of Mahli came Eleazar, who had no sons, chap. 23, 22. V. 29. Concerning Kish: The son of Kish was Jerahmeel. V. 30. The sons also of Mushi, chap. 23, 23: Mahli and Eder and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites after the house of their fathers. V. 31. These likewise cast lots over against their brethren, the sons of Aaron, in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren. It appears from this verse that the Levites were also divided into special classes, and that the work assigned to each class was likewise determined by lot, the younger brother, in this case, being given equal representation with the brother who represented the father-house. So not only the principal offices in the congregation, but the auxiliary ones as well, ought to be considered with proper seriousness, lest the Church of Christ be harmed by haphazard choosing of officers.

CHAPTER 25.

The Singers and Their Divisions.

Number and Office of the Singers. — V. 1. Moreover, David and the captains of the host, the princes of chap. 23, 3; 24, 6, legislative and judicial officers, separated to the service of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, their playing being an expression of inspiration and enthusiasm, music tending to aid the feeling of exaltation, with psalteries, and with cymbals. And the number of the workmen, of the men engaged for this purpose, according to their service, was: v. 2. Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah (or Jesharelah), the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied according to the order of the king, literally, "by the hands of the king," under the personal direction of Asaph and the other masters. V. 3. Of Jeduthun: The sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, and Zeri (or Izri), and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, that is, including Shimei mentioned v. 17, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, working under his direction, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the Lord. As it has been the practise of the prophets to rouse their prophetic spirit by the inspiring influence of music, so this became a custom in later times for the arousing of religious enthusiasm. Cp. 2 Kings 3, 15. V. 4. Of Heman: The sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel (or Azareel), Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth. V. 5. All these were the sons of Heman, the king's seer in the words, the matters, of God, a mediator of divine revelations to the king, like Jeduthun, 2 Chron. 25, 15, and Gad, chap. 21, 9, to lift up the horn, since he was the special instructor and the leader in the wind instruments. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters, the fact that children are a gift of God being emphasized time and again in Holy Scripture. V. 6. All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord, the four sons of Asaph, the six of Jeduthun, and the fourteen of Heman, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, in charge of the liturgical part of divine worship, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. V. 7. So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, the leaders among the musicians in the king's Tabernacle and in that at Gibeon, even all that were cunning, was two hundred four-

score and eight. There were thus twenty-four classes, or choirs, of twelve musicians each, one class of skilful and experienced leaders being engaged for a week at a time, and having charge, in rotation, of those of the four thousand singers who were then on duty. Songs of praise, skilfully rendered in honor of the Lord, are a delight to Him, especially if the work is done systematically and in harmony.

Divisions of the Singers into Orders. — V. 8. **And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.** The lot was cast over the divisions or companies to determine their arrangement according to master and assistants, so that nothing was left to capricious choice. V. 9. **Now, the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph; the second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons,** his companions in the art of music and singing, **were twelve;** v. 10. **the third to Saccur; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 11. **the fourth to Izri; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 12. **the fifth to Nethaniah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 13. **the sixth to Bukkiah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 14. **the seventh to Jesharelah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 15. **the eighth to Jeshaiah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 16. **the ninth to Mattaniah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 17. **the tenth to Shimei; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 18. **the eleventh to Azareel; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 19. **the twelfth to Hashabiah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 20. **the thirteenth to Shubael; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 21. **the fourteenth to Mattithiah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 22. **the fifteenth to Jeremoth; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 23. **the sixteenth to Hananiah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 24. **the seventeenth to Joshbekashah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 25. **the eighteenth to Hanani; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 26. **the nineteenth to Mallothi; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 27. **the twentieth to Eliathah; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 28. **the one and twentieth to Hothir; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 29. **the two and twentieth to Giddalti; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 30. **the three and twentieth to Mahazioth; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve;** v. 31. **the four and twentieth to Romamti-ezer; he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve.** This was the way in which the musicians were arranged in the order of their service, all in agreement with the principle that God is a God of order, and that all disturbing elements should be kept from church-services, in order not to interfere with the devotion of the worshipers.

CHAPTER 26.

The Other Levitical Offices.

Division and Work of the Porters. — V. 1. **Concerning the divisions of the porters,** the four thousand men in charge of the entrances and the overseeing of the work connected with the coming in and going out of the worshipers: **Of the Korhites,** the descendants of Korah, **was Meshelemiah** (or Shelemiah), **the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph** (or Ebiasaph). V. 2. **And the sons of Meshelemiah were: Zechariah, the first-born; Jediael, the second; Zebadiah, the third; Jathniel, the fourth;** v. 3. **Elam, the fifth; Jehohanan, the sixth; Elioenai, the seventh.** V. 4. **Moreover, the sons of Obed-edom,** the Levite in whose house the ark had been kept for several months, chap. 13, 13. 14, **were: Shemaiah, the first-born; Jehozabad, the second; Joah, the third; and Sacar, the fourth; and Nethaneel, the fifth;** v. 5. **Ammiel, the sixth; Issachar, the seventh; Peulthai, the eighth; for God blessed him,** namely, by giving Obed-edom many sons and, through them, many descendants, seventy-two being named in the historical accounts. V. 6. **Also unto Shemaiah, his son, were sons born that ruled throughout the house of their father,** leading men in their father-houses; **for they were mighty men of valor,** and physical strength and energy were very essential for their work. V. 7. **The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren were strong men, also distinguished for their bodily strength, Elihu, and Semachiah.** V. 8. **All these of the sons of Obed-edom; they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service,** intellectual ability being combined with physical strength, **were threescore and two of Obed-edom.** V. 9. **And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen.** V. 10. **Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Simri, the chief;** (for though he was not the first-born, yet his father made him the chief; none of the families springing from Hosah possessed the birthright, probably because the oldest son had died without male heirs;) v. 11. **Hilkiah, the second; Tebaliah, the third; Zechariah, the fourth. All the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.** V. 12. **Among these were the**

divisions of the porters, even among the chief men, having wards one against another to minister in the house of the Lord. These men were heads of the twenty-four courses of porters, in charge of the watches as they were changed regularly. V. 13. **And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate,** literally, "for gate by gate," their chiefs or captains being selected for them and the duties of the respective gates being assigned to them by lot, in the same way as those of the other Levitical bodies. V. 14. **And the lot eastward, for the eastern gate, fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah, his son, a wise counselor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward,** he was given charge of the gate on that side. V. 15. **To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons the house of Asuppim,** literally, "the house of collections," a place for the sacred stores and Temple treasures, for which they were held responsible. V. 16. **To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward, with the gate Shallecheth,** apparently the gate out of which the refuse was hauled, to be burned outside the city, as the Law required, **by the causeway of the going up, ward against ward,** since from it an inclined road led to the lower city, and one ward was like another. V. 17. **Eastward,** where most of the worshipers entered, **were six Levites, northward four a day,** these two stations being in charge of Meshelemiah and his son Zechariah, **southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two and two,** a total of eight guards under the command of Obed-edom. V. 18. **At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, at the entrance of the road, and two at Parbar,** cells for depositing stores and utensils for the use of the Temple. V. 19. **These are the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari.** A proper distribution of these apparent minor details serves to keep the entire worship in good order, unmarred by disagreeable pauses and obstructions.

The Levites in Charge of the Treasures and the Officers. — V. 20. **And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God and over the treasures of the dedicated things,** such gifts as were consecrated to the Lord as special gifts of thanksgiving by David. This general statement is now specialized. V. 21. **As concerning the sons of Laadan** (or Libni), **the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, even of Laadan the Gershonite, were Jehieli.** V. 22. **The sons of Jehieli: Zetham and Joel, his brother, which were over the treasures of the house of the Lord,** the Temple treaures in the strictest sense. V. 23. **Of the Amramites and the Izharites, the Hebronites and the Uzzielites;** v. 24. **and Shebuel, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures,** the chief administrator or superintendent of all the Sanctuary treasures. V. 25. **And his brethren by Eliezer,** that is, springing from Moses by Eliezer: **Rehabiah, his son; and Jeshaiah, his son; and Joram, his son; and Zichri, his son; and Shelomith, his son.** V. 26. **Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, booty and gifts consecrated to the Lord, which David the king and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated.** V. 27. **Out of the spoils won in battles,** literally, "out of the wars and the spoil," **did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord,** to build it of such a size and magnificence as David had planned. V. 28. **And all that Samuel, the seer, and Saul, the son of Kish, and Abner, the son of Ner, and Joab, the son of Zeruiah, the various leaders and commanders of the army, had dedicated; and whosoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomith and of his brethren,** they had the charge of, and the responsibility for, all this precious material. V. 29. **Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business over Israel, for officers,** that is, scribes, **and judges.** In the hands of these officers and their assistants was the entire administration of the external business concerned with the Temple and its up-keep in Israel, the exaction of taxes, the payment of tithes, and all other similar business. V. 30. **And of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valor, a thousand and seven hundred, were officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward in all the business of the Lord and in the service of the king,** being spiritual overseers of the people with reference to their duty toward the established worship. V. 31. **Among the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even among the Hebronites, according to the generations of his fathers. In the fortieth,** that is, in the last, **year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead,** which explains the fact that the oversight on the eastern side of Jordan was also in the hands of the Hebronites. V. 32. **And his brethren, men of valor, were two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers,** in this case family fathers, **whom King David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh for every matter pertaining to God and affairs of the king,** their position being that of magistrates, of officials exercising judicial functions, since the Law of God was also the law of the land, in a modified theocratic government.

CHAPTER 27.

Further Officials of the Kingdom.

The Captains and Princes of Israel. — V. 1. **Now, the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds,** the commanders of the twelve divisions of the army and the officers under their command, **and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand.** This was the number included in the division or legion of each tribe, their term of service being a month each in rotation. There were thus always twenty-four thousand soldiers on duty, and an army of at least 288,000 men was available on very short notice, which, with its total number of officers, 12,000, could make a very creditable showing at any time. Moreover, it is probable that the same individuals from every tribe were not always enrolled, and that the number of trained soldiers was twice the number given. V. 2. **Over the first course for the first month was Jashobeam, the son of Zabdiel; and in his course were twenty and four thousand,** these being, in turn, divided into regiments of one thousand, with twenty-four captains, and into companies of one hundred men each, with 240 centurions. In the military courses the highest dignity, though not that of authority, was given to the hero with the most exploits to his credit. V. 3. **Of the children of Perez was the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month.** V. 4. **And over the course of the second month was Dodai, an Ahohite,** a great champion of the army, 2 Sam. 23, 9, **and of his course was Mikloth also the ruler,** the captain actually in command; **in his course likewise were twenty and four thousand.** V. 5. **The third captain of the host for the third month was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada,** chap. 11, 22. 25; 2 Sam. 23, 23, **a chief priest,** rather, a chief or principal officer; **and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 6. **This is that Benaiah who was mighty among the thirty and above the thirty; and in his course was Ammizabad, his son.** V. 7. **The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel, the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah, his son, after him; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 8. **The fifth captain for the fifth month was Shamhuth the Izrahite; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 9. **The sixth captain for the sixth month was Ira, the son of Ikkesh, the Tekoite; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 10. **The seventh captain for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 11. **The eighth captain for the eighth month was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zarhites; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 12. **The ninth captain for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anetothite, of the Benjamites; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 13. **The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarhites; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 14. **The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** V. 15. **The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai** (or Heled) **the Netophathite, of Othniel,** whose family, through his connection with Caleb, was included in the tribe of Judah; **and in his course were twenty and four thousand.** Many of the champions here named have occurred in the list of David's heroes, chap. 11, 27—31. V. 16. **Furthermore, over the tribes of Israel,** no reason being evident for the order of the tribes as here given, and for the omission of Gad and Asher: **the ruler of the Reubenites was Eliezer, the son of Zichri; of the Simeonites, Shephatiah, the son of Maachah;** v. 17. **of the Levites, Hashabiah, the son of Kemuel,** who, although under the high priest in all church affairs, was the civil officer of the tribe and had jurisdiction in all civil matters; **of the Aaronites, Zadok,** the importance of the line of Eliezer thus being emphasized; v. 18. **of Judah, Elihu** (or Eliab), **one of the brethren of David; of Issachar, Omri, the son of Michael;** v. 19. **of Zebulun, Ishmaiah, the son of Obadiah; of Naphtali, Jerimoth, the son of Azriel;** v. 20. **of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea, the son of Azaziah; of the half-tribe of Manasseh,** west of Jordan, **Joel, the son of Pedaiah;** v. 21. **of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo, the son of Zechariah; of Benjamin, Jaasiel, the son of Abner;** v. 22. **of Dan, Azareel, the son of Jeroham. These were the princes of the tribes of Israel,** the hereditary chiefs, or rulers, in whom the civil authority was vested. Every government is ordained of God, who wants the work of the government to be carried on in a systematic and efficient manner.

Special Officers of the Nation. — V. 23. **But David,** at the time of that unfortunate census, **took not the number of them from twenty years old and under,** which would, moreover, not have fitted in with the army arrangements which he had in view, **because the Lord had said He would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens,** Gen. 15, 5; 28, 14. V. 24. **Joab, the son of Zeruiah, began to number,** as David commanded him,

chap. 21, 2, **but he finished not,** the pestilence from the Lord falling upon the people before he had visited the tribe of Benjamin, **because there fell wrath for it against Israel,** chap. 21, 7; 2 Sam. 24, 15; **neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of King David,** not entered in the daily records or annals of the king's reign, partly on account of the incompleteness of the records, partly on account of the terrible calamity associated with the census. V. 25. **And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth, the son of Adiel,** he was in charge of the property and the spoils of war which were the property of the crown; **and over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles,** the towers or forts used for storehouses, **was Jehonathan, the son of Uzziah;** v. 26. **and over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground,** the laborers on the royal domains, **was Ezri, the son of Chelub;** v. 27. **and over the vineyards,** the territory of Judah being particularly adapted for wine-growing, **was Shimei the Ramathite,** of Rama, in the tribe of Benjamin; **over the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars,** the large vats, or reservoirs, for storing wine, **was Zabdi the Shiphmite;** v. 28. **and over the olive-trees and the sycomore-trees,** that is, the sycomore-fig trees, **that were in the low plains,** especially in the southeastern and eastern part of Canaan, **was Baal-hanan the Gederite; and over the cellars of oil was Joash;** v. 29. **and over the herds that fed in Sharon,** the rich plain in the west, between Caesarea and Joppa, **was Shitrai the Sharonite; and over the herds that were in the valleys,** namely, those in the hill country of Judah, **was Shaphat, the son of Adlai;** v. 30. **over the camels also,** among the richest possessions of the king, **was Obil the Ishmaelite,** of a race which had always kept camels; **and over the asses,** these, like the camels, probably being in the country east of Jordan, **was Jehdeiah the Meronothite;** v. 31. **and over the flocks,** the sheep and goats, **was Jaziz the Hagerite. All these were the rulers of the substance which was King David's.** V. 32. **Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe,** the word here not designating an office, but literary activity; **and Jehiel, the son of Hachmoni,** or the Hachmonite, **was with the king's sons,** a member of David's council; v. 33. **and Ahithophel was the king's counselor,** 2 Sam. 15, 12; **and Hushai the Archite was the king's companion,** a very close and trusted friend, 2 Sam. 15, 37; v. 34. **and after Ahithophel was Jehoiada, the son of Benaiah,** bearing the same name as his grandfather, **and Abiathar,** the priest of the line of Ithamar; **and the general,** the commander-in-chief and, at the same time, the minister of war, **of the king's army was Joab.** It is a blessing of God upon a country if its ruler is a wise administrator, who is able also to choose the best assistants in all departments of his rule.

CHAPTER 28.

David's Exhortation to the People and to Solomon.

David Admonishes the People Concerning the Temple. — V. 1. **And David assembled all the princes of Israel,** all the representatives of the nation in positions of authority, **the princes of the tribes,** the hereditary chieftains, **and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course,** the twelve generals of Israel's legions, **and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king,** those mentioned at the end of the preceding chapter, **and of his sons,** counselors and tutors, **with the officers,** the eunuchs, or attendants at court, **inside the palace, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem,** for a last great assembly. V. 2. **Then David the king stood up upon his feet,** having sat before on account of the infirmities of old age, **and said, Hear me, my brethren, an address showing both humility and sincere friendliness, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord,** where it might permanently be located and no longer be disturbed, **and for the footstool of our God,** the cover of the ark, the mercy-seat, where God was enthroned between the cherubim, **and had made ready for the building;** v. 3. **but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for My name,** chap. 17, 4, **because thou hast been a man of war and hast shed blood,** in his various campaigns against the surrounding heathen nations. V. 4. **Howbeit, the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever,** although he was the youngest son of the family, 1 Sam. 16, 7—13; **for He hath chosen Judah to be the ruler,** in the last blessing of Jacob, Gen. 49, 8—10, **and of the house of Judah the house of my father,** 1 Sam. 16, 1, **and among the sons of my father He liked me, to make me king over all Israel;** v. 5. **and of all my sons** (**for the Lord hath given me many sons,** chap. 3, 1; 23, 1) **He hath chosen Solomon, my son, to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel,** chap. 22, 9. V. 6. **And He said unto me, Solomon,**

thy son, he shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father, the relationship thus being typical of that obtaining with Christ, to whom the entire prophecy, 2 Sam. 7, 12 ff., pointed forward. V. 7. **Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever if he be constant,** full of determination and strength, **to do My commandments and My judgments,** both those pertaining to all mankind in general and those intended for Israel in particular, **as at this day.** V. 8. **Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord,** all members of which would naturally look up to the leaders of the people for guidance, **and in the audience of our God,** who, as they all knew, was present in this assembly, **keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord, your God,** with great earnestness and zeal, **that ye may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you forever.** Earthly blessings are still given by the Lord in return for civil righteousness, and to believers their works of faith in this respect are counted as good works. Note: Like David, Christ also, whose type David was, was selected from among His brethren, but anointed with the Holy Ghost above His brethren, the members of the human family.

Special Encouragement Addressed to Solomon. — V. 9. **And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father,** who had so often helped David out of his troubles, **and serve Him with a perfect heart,** with undivided allegiance, **and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts,** wherefore a mere hand- and lip-service cannot deceive Him. **If thou seek Him,** desiring His inner acquaintance in true love and service, **He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever,** this being the manner employed by the Lord to this day; He wants heart-service, not mere head-knowledge. V. 10. **Take heed, now,** watch closely, mark well; **for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the Sanctuary,** to serve as a place dedicated to the Lord; **be strong and do it.** V. 11. **Then David gave to Solomon, his son, the pattern,** the model, or sketch, **of the porch,** that immediately before the Sanctuary, or Temple proper, **and of the houses thereof,** all the buildings of the Temple, **and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof,** those flanking the Sanctuary, used as storerooms for the vestments of the priests and other precious things, **and of the inner parlors thereof,** the portico before the Sanctuary and the Holy Place, **and of the place of the mercy-seat,** the Most Holy Place, v. 12. **and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit,** of all that his spirit had in thought, of everything that was in his mind, which he had caused the architects and draftsmen to sketch and to model, **of the courts of the house of the Lord,** that of the priests and that of the people, **and of all the chambers round about,** also those used for the assembling of the ministers in charge and for living quarters, **of the treasuries of the house of God,** where the regular income of the Temple was placed, **and of the treasuries of the dedicated things,** where special free-will gifts, especially of precious metals, were placed: v. 13. **also for the courses of the priests and the Levites,** as David had determined them, **and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the Lord.** Cp. chap. 23—26. V. 14. **He gave,** or rather, stated, **of gold by weight for things of gold,** giving the weight or amount of the precious metal to be used in making the various vessels and appointments, **for all instruments of all manner of service; silver also for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service;** v. 15. **even the weight for the candlesticks of gold and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick and for the lamps thereof,** these being intended for use in the Sanctuary, **and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the candlestick and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick,** these silver candlesticks probably being used in the courts and chambers. The lamps of the candlesticks are mentioned separately because they were daily filled with oil and placed in the cup- or blossom-shaped containers on the arms of the candlesticks. V. 16. **And by weight he gave,** or stated, **gold for the tables of showbread,** the one table for this bread here being included with the stands for the candlesticks, **for every table, and likewise silver for the tables of silver,** for the stands which held the silver candlesticks; v. 17. **also pure gold for the flesh-hooks,** the forks used in cooking the pieces of the sacrifices, **and the bowls,** the sprinkling-bowls used so much in sacrificial worship, **and the cups,** the covered cans, or tankards, used in drink-offerings; **and for the golden basins he gave gold by weight for every basin,** stating how much should be used in each instance; **and likewise silver by weight for every basin of silver;** v. 18. **and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight,** to cover the entire frame-work of acacia-wood; **and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim,** the mercy-seat being called so on account of the fact that the cherubim were represented with their wings extended as if moving rapidly, **that spread out their wings, and covered the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.** V. 19. **All this, said David, the Lord made me**

understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern. It is probable that David, in a vision, saw the entire edifice, with all its separate buildings and appointments, so clearly that he was enabled to have the sketches and the models made exactly as they had appeared to him at that time. V. 20. **And David said to Solomon, his son, taking up his admonition once more where he stopped when showing the models, Be strong and of good courage and do it; fear not nor be dismayed,** the entire trend of the address showing unflinching confidence and steadfast determination; **for the Lord God, even my God, the one** whom David had served so faithfully all his life, **will be with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.** V. 21. **And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites,** who were surely also represented in the assembly on that day, **even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God; and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man for any manner of service,** the skilled artisan as well as the ordinary craftsman or workman; **also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment;** of this David was convinced from his acquaintance with them all and from the cheerful loyalty they had shown him for more than thirty years, except in the matter of the rebellion of Absalom. It is well-pleasing to God and serves as a great encouragement to His servants if all men, great and small, stand together for the purpose of building His kingdom on earth, no matter what special business may be at hand.

CHAPTER 29.

The People's Willingness and David's Thankfulness.

The Offering of the Princes and of the People. — V. 1. **Furthermore, David the king said unto all the congregation,** assembled before him in its representatives, **Solomon, my son, whom alone God hath chosen,** and not one of the other sons who had attempted to gain the crown for themselves, **is yet young and tender,** still a young and inexperienced man, for this was before the Lord had endowed him with extraordinary wisdom, **and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God,** and therefore it must be decidedly out of the ordinary in every respect. V. 2. **Now, I have prepared with all my might,** with all the effort he could summon, **for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones,** either sardonyx or beryl, **and stones to be set, glistering stones,** of a very dark glancing color, such as carbuncles or rubies, **and of divers colors,** mottled like agates, **and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.** V. 3. **Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God,** because his whole heart and mind was set on the fulfilment of this desire of his life, **I have of mine own proper good,** of his own private fortune, **of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,** in addition to the precious metals set aside from the spoils of the various wars, v. 4. **even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir,** celebrated for its purity, **and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal,** this amount being estimated at $40,000,000: v. 5. **the gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers,** the craftsmen and silversmiths. **And who, then, is willing to consecrate his service,** literally, "to fill his hand," **this day unto the Lord?** The meaning is that every one following the king in his voluntary offering would be making a free-will sacrifice to Jehovah. Each believer, a priest to the Lord, would thus worship by presenting his sacrifice in person. V. 6. **Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work,** inspired by the appeal of the king, **offered willingly,** they executed their priestly privilege in offering liberally, v. 7. **and gave for the service of the house of God,** as their contribution for its erection and equipment, **of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams,** rather, darics, the author here using the name of a Persian coin with which he had become familiar during the exile to designate a smaller amount in weight, **and of silver ten thousand talents,** the total amount in precious metals being over $60,000,000, **and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.** V. 8. **And they with whom precious stones were found gave them,** literally, "whatever was found along with it of precious stones they gave," **to the treasure of the house of the Lord, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite,** who had charge of the treasuries of the Temple, chap. 26, 21. V. 9. **Then the people rejoiced for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart,** a heart which did not secretly begrudge the gift, **they**

offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. That is invariably the experience of believers: The more they give and the more willingly they give for the kingdom of the Lord, for its spread at home and abroad, the more pleasure they themselves have of their action. A congregation in which this spirit prevails is happy above others and usually will show much more spiritual life than one in which the work of the Lord is carried on with an unwilling heart, even if the quota is reached.

David's Thanksgiving. — V. 10. **Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation,** in a spontaneous overflow of delight and gratitude at seeing the willing response of the people with regard to the favorite project of his life. **And David said, Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.** It was a sincere cry: All glory be to God on high! V. 11. **Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty,** the shining beauty of the Lord's wonderful essence stood out at this time; **for all that is in heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord,** that is, the sovereignty, **and Thou art exalted as Head above all.** V. 12. **Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all,** all worldly wealth being really a gift of His gracious hand; **and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.** V. 13. **Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee,** as the Giver of all good gifts, **and praise Thy glorious name,** literally, "the name of Thy glory"; it is wonderful and glorious in itself, and the purpose of our praise is to keep it most glorious above all. V. 14. **But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?** The very willingness to serve the Lord with the gifts of our hands is a blessing of His grace. **For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.** We are merely God's stewards, in charge of goods which He entrusts to us for the few brief years of our earthly existence. In reality all the goods of which we proclaim ourselves the proud owners are God's alone, and He will hold us responsible for their administration. V. 15. **For we are strangers before Thee and sojourners, as were all our fathers,** the uncertainty and vanity of this earthly life being its most conspicuous feature. **Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.** Note how strongly the otherworldliness of the true religion is emphasized. V. 16. **O Lord, our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand and is all Thine own;** they were merely carrying out the duties of their stewardship in placing their money at God's disposal for this purpose. V. 17. **I know also, my God, that Thou triest the heart and hast pleasure in uprightness,** a mere outward show of piety without true willingness of the heart being an abomination to Him. **As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now have I seen with joy Thy people which are present here to offer willingly unto Thee,** the same spirit of cheerful willingness prompted both the king and the people. V. 18. **O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people,** this same spirit of cheerful willingness, **and prepare their heart unto Thee,** establishing them in faith in Jehovah alone; v. 19. **and give unto Solomon, my son, a perfect heart to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace for the which I have made provision,** the great Temple, the total sum gathered for which has been estimated from a little less than five billion dollars to five times that sum. V. 20. **And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord, your God,** in thanking Him for His goodness shown that day. **And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshiped the Lord and the king,** not praying to the latter, but honoring him as the Lord's representative. V. 21. **And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord,** both in atoning for the transgressions of the past and in establishing the right relationship between themselves and God, **on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel;** v. 22. **and did eat and drink before the Lord,** in the sacrificial meal connected with their offerings, **on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon, the son of David, king the second time,** the first crowning having taken place rather suddenly upon Adonijah's conspiracy, 1 Kings 1, 35, **and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest,** the degradation of the other high priest, Abiathar, of the line of Ithamar, dating from this time. V. 23. **Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord,** Jehovah Himself always being considered as the real Ruler of the nation, **as king instead of David, his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him,** he reigned over a united kingdom. V. 24. **And all the princes,** the hereditary chieftains, **and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of King David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king,**

by the ceremony of putting their hand under the king's extended hand, and kissing the back of it. V. 25. **And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel;** the two rulers before him had had little of the majestic and magnificent splendor which characterized Solomon. — The book now closes with a summary of the reign of David. V. 26. **Thus David, the son of Jesse, reigned over all Israel.** V. 27. **And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years,** in round numbers; **seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.** V. 28. **And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor,** glory among the people of his own nation and abroad; **and Solomon, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 29. **Now, the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of Samuel, the seer,** the historical account written by that prophet, **and in the book of Nathan, the prophet, and in the book of Gad, the seer,** v. 30. **with all his reign and his might,** his military exploits, his brave deeds, **and the times that went over him and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the countries,** all those with whom he came into hostile contact or with whom he had a friendly intercourse. Like David, the believers are gathered to the number of perfected saints, to the great number of those whose souls await the resurrection of the last Great Day.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.[1]

CHAPTER 1.

Solomon's Piety, Wisdom, and Wealth.

Solomon at Gibeon. — V. 1. **And Solomon, the son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom,** he was generally and gladly acknowledged as the ruler of the nation, **and the Lord, his God, was with him and magnified him exceedingly,** giving him a distinction and a splendor which set him apart and made for proper reverence on the part of his subjects. V. 2. **Then Solomon spake unto all Israel,** as represented in the usual way, **to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel,** the rulers of the tribes, the hereditary chieftains, **the chief of the fathers,** that is, of the father-houses. V. 3. **So Solomon and all the congregation with him,** in the second year of his reign, 1 Kings 3, 4, **went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the Tabernacle of the Congregation of God, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, had made in the wilderness,** Ex. 25 and 26. This was still the official Sanctuary of the people, although the place for the Temple had been selected and the ark was resting under the Tabernacle of David in Jerusalem. V. 4. **But the ark of God,** which for many years had not been at Gibeon, **had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it,** 2 Sam. 6, 2. 17; **for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.** V. 5. **Moreover, the brazen altar that Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made,** Ex. 31, 2, **he put before the Tabernacle of the Lord,** it still had its position before this legal Sanctuary of the nation; **and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it,** considering it their duty to present their offerings on the legally appointed altar. V. 6. **And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the Lord which was at the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it,** this great sacrifice being made, of course, by the hands of the priests. V. 7. **In that night did God appear unto Solomon,** in a dream or vision, **and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.** Cp. 1 Kings 3, 5. V. 8. **And Solomon said unto God,** the chief points of his prayer only being given here, **Thou hast showed great mercy unto David, my father,** a free acknowledgment of God's unmerited grace and mercy, **and hast made me to reign in his stead.** V. 9. **Now, O Lord God, let Thy promise unto David, my father, be established; for Thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude,** a task of ruling which was beyond any man's natural ability. V. 10. **Give me, now, wisdom and knowledge,** the latter including a deep and correct insight and understanding of affairs and business of the nation, **that I may go out and come in before this people,** in his entire public activity, in his relation to them as ruler; **for who can judge this Thy people that is so great?** Such a spirit of meekness and humility in a prayer, appealing to our heavenly Father as ignorant, inexperienced children, is well-pleasing to Him. At the same

1) For introductory remarks, see the introduction to the First Book of Chronicles.

time, our prayer may rightly remind the Lord of all His promises. V. 11. **And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor,** all gifts which the average Oriental monarch would have placed ahead of all others, **nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king,** and who were in a very particular sense God's own people, v. 12. **wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee, and I will give thee riches and wealth and honor such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.** God granted Solomon much more than he had asked for, thus giving him a proof of His merciful bounty. The Lord hears the prayers of His children if they are made according to His will, especially such as pertain to spiritual gifts and benefits. Moreover, He often blesses His children also in temporal things, in matters pertaining to this life. If we but first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all other things shall be added to us, Matt. 6, 33.

SOLOMON'S IMMENSE WEALTH. — V. 13. **Then Solomon came from his journey to the high place that was at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** where he had served the Lord by his special act of worship, **and reigned over Israel,** after having publicly offered praise and thanks to the Lord before the Ark of the Covenant. V. 14. **And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen,** who were trained to fight in chariots as well as on horseback, **which he placed in the chariot cities,** such as were especially designated for that purpose, **and with the king at Jerusalem.** V. 15. **And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones,** on account of the great masses of the precious metals which he acquired in the course of time, **and cedar-trees made he as the sycomore-trees that are in the vale for abundance,** the sycomore-fig tree being one of the most common in the valleys toward the southeast. V. 16. **And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt,** for the horses of that country were very highly valued, being as fine as Arabian steeds, but larger and more powerful, **and linen yarn,** the fine, silklike byssus of Egypt; **the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price,** or, "they fetched a troop for a certain price," delivered to certain established markets. V. 17. **And they fetched up and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver** (almost four hundred dollars) **and an horse for an hundred and fifty** (not quite one hundred dollars); **and so brought they out horses for all the kings of the Hittites and for the kings of Syria,** thereby establishing a lucrative business, **by their means.** Thus the gracious promises of God to Solomon were literally fulfilled, even as they invariably are to this day. It is but for us to trust in Him with childlike confidence, and we shall not be ashamed.

CHAPTER 2.

Solomon Obtains the Assistance of Huram.

SOLOMON'S MESSAGE TO HURAM. — V. 1. **And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord,** he made arrangements to carry out the last wishes of his father, **and an house for his kingdom,** a royal palace to display all his wealth and power. V. 2. **And Solomon told out,** raised by conscription, **threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens,** in the actual erection of the Temple, **and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain,** in preparing the stones and the lumber, **and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.** This preliminary note indicates at once the magnitude of the undertaking. V. 3. **And Solomon sent to Huram** (or Hiram), **the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David, my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein,** 1 Chron. 14, 1, even so deal with me, he was anxious to have the friendly relationship with all that it implied continue. V. 4. **Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord, my God, to dedicate it to Him,** set it aside for His worship, **and to burn before Him sweet incense,** literally, "to perfume before His face sweet spices," as it was done in the morning and the evening worship, Ex. 25, 6, **and for the continual showbread,** which was always placed on the special table in the Holy Place, Ex. 25, 30, **and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord, our God,** Num. 28, 29; 1 Chron. 23, 31. **This is an ordinance forever to Israel,** and therefore the Temple he proposed to build must be a solid and permanent building, made of the most durable materials. V. 5. **And the house which I build is great; for great is our God above all gods;** its magnificence should, in a way, express the incomparable greatness of the true God. V. 6. **But who is able to build Him an house,** that is, one in which He would actually dwell, in which He would be enclosed as the heathen idols

were in their shrines, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build Him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before Him? So the purpose of the Temple was merely to be that of serving as a house where Jehovah's worshipers might sacrifice to His honor. V. 7. Send me now, therefore, a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, an artist familiar with the work in all precious metals, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, true purple, scarlet-red, and hyacinth being the three dyes in whose preparation the Tyrians were most skilful, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David, my father, did provide. This last craft probably included not only engraving in stone, but also wood-carving and even embroidery of figures in needlework. In all these arts the superintendent desired by Solomon should excel. V. 8. Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, that is, cypresses, and algum-trees, sandal-wood, out of Lebanon, the last-named, though not growing in the mountains, being procured by Huram as an article of commerce; for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon, for that was one of the chief industries of the country. And, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants, v. 9. even to prepare me timber in abundance; for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great, literally, "great and wonderful." V. 10. And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures (about one hundred and sixty thousand bushels) of beaten wheat, roasted grain in this form being a staple article of food in the Orient, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths (about 1,300,000 gallons) of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil. The reference here is not to the yearly contribution which Solomon sent to Tyre during the construction of the Temple, 1 Kings 5, 25, but to the food for the laborers in the mountains. Solomon, as a wise king, counted the cost first before he began the work of construction, but he also went forward with all energy after being assured on this point.

HURAM'S KIND ANSWER. — V. 11. Then Huram, the king of Tyre, having received Solomon's message delivered to him in the form of a letter, answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the Lord hath loved His people, He hath made thee king over them; for wise and good kings are a gift of His merciful goodness. V. 12. Huram said moreover, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, with whose worship he was evidently familiar, having accepted the true God in faith, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, not a dead knowledge, but one which readily adjusted itself to any situation, that might build an house for the Lord and an house for his kingdom. V. 13. And now I have sent a cunning man, an artist such as Solomon desired accompanied the embassy to Jerusalem, endued with understanding, of Huram, my father's, the master's name itself being Huram, like that of the king, 1 Kings 7, 13, v. 14. the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device, to work out any pattern, which shall be put to him with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David, thy father. The artist selected by Huram not only met all the requirements of Solomon, but even exceeded them. V. 15. Now, therefore, the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants; v. 16. and we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need; and we will bring it to thee in floats, huge rafts, by sea to Joppa, along the shores of the Mediterranean; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem, the distance which the lumber had to be hauled over land being some thirty miles. V. 17. And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, the members and descendants of heathen nations in the midst of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David, his father, had numbered them, 1 Chron. 22, 2; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. V. 18. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, both to hew stones and to fell timber, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a-work, this being the total number, of which three thousand were non-Israelites, the others, both of the lower and of the higher rank, being Israelites. Note: Solomon is a type of Christ, who also built a great temple to the Lord, not of wood and stone and precious metals, but of believers in His blood. And all servants of Christ are called to assist in erecting this wonderful temple of the Lord.

CHAPTER 3.

The Building of the Temple.

The Sanctuary Proper. — V. 1. **Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah,** one summit of the range of hills which went under the general name of Zion, **where the Lord appeared unto David, his father,** rather, which was shown to his father David, namely, as the future site of the Temple, **in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite,** after the unfortunate census which David had arranged. V. 2. **And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign,** 1 Kings 6, 1. The rock platform which had formed the threshing-floor of Ornan, or Araunah, afforded room for the Sanctuary proper, but for the other buildings and the courts special foundations had to be prepared, all this requiring an immense amount of work. V. 3. **Now, these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God,** these are the fundamental proportions which he employed in erecting the Temple. **The length by cubits after the first measure,** the cubit of the old Mosaic standard, about twenty-one inches, **was threescore cubits and the breadth twenty cubits,** these being the proportions of the Sanctuary proper. V. 4. **And the porch that was in the front of the house,** a kind of covered area-way, or portico, **the length of it was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits,** the depth being ten cubits, 1 Kings 6, 3, **and the height was an hundred and twenty,** the effect being that of a tower or double tower, such as were used in other temples of ancient times: **and he overlaid it within with pure gold,** making it the most magnificent entrance of the ancient world. V. 5. **And the Greater House,** the Holy Place, **he ceiled with fir-tree,** he veneered it with cypress, noted for its ability to withstand every kind of weather, **which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm-trees and chains,** garlands in the form of chased work cut in the panels of the wall. V. 6. **And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty,** that is, he paved the house with beautiful and costly marble; **and the gold was gold of Parvaim,** especially noted for its purity. V. 7. **He overlaid also the house,** on the inside, **the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold,** either in heavy gilding or in plates, 1 Kings 6, 18. 29. 30, **and graved cherubim on the walls.** V. 8. **And he made the Most Holy House,** at the western end of the Sanctuary, **the length whereof was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits,** the room thus forming a cubical space; **and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents,** estimated at $18,000,000. V. 9. **And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold,** these nails being used to fasten the gold plate to the wooden lining of the walls. **And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.** The building of the Temple was a work of obedience and love, just as all our work for the Lord should be.

The Cherubim, the Veil, and the Pillars. V. 10. **And in the Most Holy House he made two cherubim of image work,** literally, "a work of imagery," that is, sculptured, fashioned according to a conventional design, **and overlaid them with gold,** 1 Kings 6, 28. V. 11. **And the wings of the cherubim were twenty cubits long,** that is, the four wings of the two cherubim together; **one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub,** their wings touched in the center and on either side just reached the wall. V. 12. **And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub,** 1 Kings 6, 27. V. 13. **The wings of these cherubim spread themselves forth twenty cubits; and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward,** literally, "toward the house," toward the Most Holy Place, for they were represented as guarding the ark. V. 14. **And he made the veil,** the heavy curtain hanging before the Most Holy Place, **of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen,** of the same four fine materials of which the veil in the Tabernacle had been made, Ex. 26, 31, **and wrought cherubim thereon,** weaving their figures into the cloth. V. 15. **Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high,** rather, eighteen, as the original Hebrew text undoubtedly had it, or their combined height is given without their bases, **and the chapiter,** the capital, **that was on the top of each of them was five cubits.** V. 16. **And he made chains,** garlands, as in the oracle, in the network of ornamental castings on or below the capitals, **and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made an hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains,** so that there was an apple on every link of the chainlike ornament. V. 17. **And he reared up the pillars before the Temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left,** as entrance obelisks of a grandeur in keeping with the rich interior of the Sanctuary; **and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin and the name of that on the left Boaz.** Cp. 1 Kings 7, 21. As at the time of the wilderness journey, so the Lord now had a resting-place in the midst of His people, where they might worship Him.

CHAPTER 4.

The Appointments of the Temple.

THE ALTAR, THE MOLTEN SEA, AND THE LAVERS. — V. 1. **Moreover, he,** Solomon, through the craftsmen engaged by him, **made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof and twenty cubits the breadth thereof and ten cubits the height thereof,** to which the priests probably ascended by an inclined pathway. The weight of this altar, if the thickness of its walls was only three inches, must have been at least two hundred tons. V. 2. **Also he made a molten sea,** cast from bronze or brass, **of ten cubits from brim to brim,** that is, in diameter, **round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits,** in a rough measurement, **did compass it round about,** the exact circumference being not quite 31½ cubits. It was a large reservoir for the water used by the priests and Levites in the performance of their duties, especially for the many washings enjoined upon them. V. 3. **And under it,** cast together with the flower-buds which were beneath its rim, 1 Kings 7, 24, **was the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about,** serving for ornamentation. **Two rows of oxen were cast when it was cast,** the sea with its decorations was cast at the same time, in the same mold. V. 4. **It stood upon twelve oxen,** which bore the great reservoir on their backs, **three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward,** their heads looking out from under the brim. V. 5. **And the thickness of it was an handbreadth and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies,** rather, like the blossom of a lily; **and it received and held three thousand baths,** that is, its full capacity, when used as a reservoir, was so much; when not in actual use, it held two thousand baths, 1 Kings 7, 26. V. 6. **He made also ten lavers,** 1 Kings 7, 38, smaller receptacles for water, which could be moved about on wheels, as the washing of the sacrificial animals required it, **and put five on the right hand and five on the left, to wash in them. Such things as they offered,** that is, the flesh of the animals, **for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in,** the water probably being drawn out below by means of faucets. V. 7. **And he made ten candlesticks of gold according to their form,** in place of the one made by Moses for the Tabernacle, Ex. 25, 31. 40, **and set them in the Temple,** that is, the Holy Place, not the court, as in the case of the lavers, **five on the right hand and five on the left.** V. 8. **He made also ten tables,** stands for the ten candlesticks, **and placed them in the Temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made an hundred basins of gold,** bowls or tankards used for the drink-offerings. Note: All the washings of the Old Testament worship were typical of the time of the New Testament, where we have a lasting fountain for sin and for uncleanness in the blood of Christ.

THE VESSELS OF BRASS AND OF GOLD. — V. 9. **Furthermore he made the court of the priests,** the inner court, in which the altar of burnt offering was situated, **and the Great Court,** the Court of Israel, where the worshiping people assembled, **and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.** V. 10. **And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south,** southeast of the altar of burnt offering. V. 11. **And Huram made the pots and the shovels and the basins,** the pots for carrying away the ashes, the shovels for removing the ashes from the great altar, the bowls for receiving and sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices. **And Huram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God,** a catalog now following like 1 Kings 7, 40—47; v. 12. **to wit, the two pillars, and the pommels,** the rounded part of the capitals or just beneath them, **and the chapiters which were on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths,** the network of garlands, **to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which were on the top of the pillars;** v. 13. **and four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which were upon the pillars.** V. 14. **He made also bases,** movable holders, **and lavers,** in the form of large caldrons, or kettles, **made he upon the bases;** v. 15. **one sea, and twelve oxen under it.** V. 16. **The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks,** the large forks used in preparing the sacrificial meat, **and all their instruments did Huram, his father,** rather, the master, the chief artisan, **make to King Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass.** V. 17. **In the Plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground,** which was particularly adapted for the molds used in casting, **between Succoth and Zeredathah** (or Zarthan), 1 Kings 7, 46. V. 18. **Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance, for the weight of the brass could not be found out.** V. 19. **And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar** also, the altar of incense which stood next to the veil of the Most Holy Place, **and the tables whereon the showbread was set,**

only one being in use at one time, however, 1 Kings 7, 48; v. 20. **moreover, the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner,** as prescribed by the Law, Ex. 27, 20. 21, **before the Oracle,** the Most Holy Place, **of pure gold;** v. 21. **and the flowers,** the ornaments on the candlesticks in the shape of almond-blossoms, **and the lamps, and the tongs,** the snuffers used for these lamps, **made he of gold, and that perfect gold;** v. 22. **and the snuffers,** the knives for cleaning the wicks, **and the basins,** probably those used on the Great Day of Atonement, **and the spoons,** trays or holders for the incense, **and the censers,** the pans for holding coals when offering incense, **of pure gold; and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the Most Holy Place, and the doors of the house of the Temple,** those leading into the Holy Place, **were of gold.** All this outward magnificence, however, cannot compare with the inward beauty of the Church of Christ, decorated, as she is, with the righteousness of her Savior.

CHAPTER 5.

The Beginning of the Dedication Ceremonies.

The Ark Brought to the Most Holy Place. — V. 1. **Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished,** 1 Kings 7, 51. **And Solomon brought in all the things that David, his father, had dedicated,** all the free-will offerings which David had consecrated to Jehovah, 1 Chron. 22, 14—16; 29, 3. 4; **and the silver and the gold and all the instruments,** the vessels used in the worship of the Temple, **put he among the treasures of the house of God.** V. 2. **Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes,** the hereditary princes, **the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel,** as representatives of the entire nation, **unto Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the City of David, which is Zion.** David's Tabernacle, where the ark had temporarily been placed, was near his palace, and from this place it was now transported to the heights of Mount Moriah, to its resting-place in the Most Holy Place of the Temple. V. 3. **Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast, which was in the seventh month,** just before the Feast of Tabernacles. V. 4. **And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites,** priests of the tribe of Levi, **took up the ark.** V. 5. **And they brought up the ark and the Tabernacle of the Congregation,** the latter being borne by the Levites proper, as usual, to be preserved in one of the chambers of the Temple as a sacred relic, **and all the holy vessels that were in the Tabernacle; these did the priests and the Levites bring up.** V. 6. **Also King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark,** as it was being transported to its place in the Temple on that great eighth of Ethanim, **sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude,** no attempt being made to keep an exact account. V. 7. **And the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the Oracle of the house, into the Most Holy Place, even under the wings of the cherubim,** which had been placed there for that purpose, chap. 3, 10—13; v. 8. **for the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above,** their height of ten cubits causing them to tower above the ark with its mercy-seat. V. 9. **And they drew out the staves of the ark,** those inserted in rings at its corners to carry it with, **that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the Oracle; but they were not seen without,** 1 Kings 8, 8. **And there it is unto this day,** namely, at the time this account was written, as used by the chronicler. V. 10. **There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt,** Deut. 10, 2. 5. All this solemnity was not a mere outward ceremony, but an expression of the deepest conviction of the heart, as it should actuate all believers at all times.

The Glory of the Lord in the Temple. — V. 11. **And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the Holy Place; (for all the priests that were present were sanctified and did not then wait by course;** on account of the greatness of the festival and the unusual number of sacrifices all the priests were required, and so they all, without regard to any courses, were sanctified for the work; v. 12. **also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun,** in the companies as fixed by the order of David, 1 Chron. 25, 1, **with their sons and their brethren,** being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, near the entrance to the Court of the Priests, **and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets,** cp. 1 Chron. 15, 17—28;) v. 13. **it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one,** voices and instruments rising in one wonderful sound of rejoicing, **to make one sound to be heard in praising**

and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth forever, that then, when this climax in the celebration was reached, the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, the entire Sanctuary, v. 14. **so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud,** this being the well-known light-cloud (shechinah) dwelling in the Tabernacle since the time of Moses; **for the glory of the Lord,** manifesting His gracious presence in this wonderful cloud, **had filled the house of God.** In the New Testament we have a much more wonderful manifestation of the gracious presence of God, since the eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, revealing to them His glory, a glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

CHAPTER 6.

The Dedicatory Service.

SOLOMON'S DEDICATORY ADDRESS. — V. 1. **Then said Solomon, The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness,** Lev. 16, 2. As St. Paul expresses it: He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see, 1 Tim. 6, 16. The union of the believers with the Lord is still hidden from the eyes of men; it is invisible and will not be revealed until the last Great Day. V. 2. **But I have built an house of habitation for Thee and a place for Thy dwelling forever.** Solomon's remark was suggested by the fact that the cloud of God's presence had filled the Sanctuary; for he knew that the Lord would continue to reveal Himself from the mercy-seat of the ark, that He had promised to dwell among His people with His grace as long as they continued to walk in His ways. V. 3. **And the king turned his face,** for he had been looking toward the Sanctuary and now faced about toward the multitude assembled in the court in the eastern end of the Temple area, **and blessed the whole congregation of Israel. And all the congregation of Israel stood,** to receive the king's good wishes with becoming reverence. V. 4. **And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,** to whom alone he intended to give all glory, **who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spake with His mouth to my father David, saying,** v. 5. **Since the day that I brought forth My people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in that My name might be there,** He had had no permanent place of worship, no fixed place of abode in Israel; **neither chose I any man to be ruler over My people Israel,** this being at the time when there was an absolute theocratic rule in the country, only the Judges assuming the leadership when God deemed it wise, cp. 2 Sam. 7, 6. 7; v. 6. **but I have chosen Jerusalem that My name might be there, and have chosen David to be over My people Israel,** 1 Chron. 28, 4. V. 7. **Now, it was in the heart of David, my father, to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel,** 2 Sam. 7, 2; 1 Chron. 17, 1; 28, 2. V. 8. **But the Lord said to David, my father,** through Nathan, the prophet, **Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for My name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart,** this intention showed the sincerity of David's love for, and reverence of, Jehovah. V. 9. **Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house, but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for My name,** 1 Chron. 17, 4—10. V. 10. **The Lord therefore hath performed His word that He hath spoken; for I am risen up in the room of David, my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built the house for the name of the Lord God of Israel,** to His honor alone, and to afford a place where the worshipers of the true God might assemble in His name. V. 11. **And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord,** on the two tables of stone, where God wrote it with His own hand, **that He made with the children of Israel.** Note: The covenant of the New Testament is even more glorious than that of the Old. Wherever the Word of God is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered, there God Himself is present, there He reveals to men His grace and His truth.

SOLOMON'S DEDICATORY PRAYER. — V. 12. **And he stood before the altar of the Lord,** facing the altar of burnt offerings, **in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands,** in a gesture of entreaty; v. 13. **for Solomon had made a brazen scaffold,** a pulpitlike platform, **of five cubits long and five cubits broad and three cubits high** (approximately nine by nine by five feet), **and had set it in the midst of the court; and upon it he stood,** visible to the entire multitude, **and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,** v. 14. **and said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in the heaven nor in the earth,** Jehovah being the only true God; **which keepest covenant and showest mercy unto Thy servants that walk before Thee with**

all their hearts, ordering their entire lives in conformity with God's holy will; v. 15. Thou which hast kept with Thy servant David, my father, that which Thou hast promised him, and spakest with Thy mouth and hast fulfilled it with Thine hand, as it is this day, the finished Temple being a proof of the faithfulness of the Lord's promises. V. 16. Now, therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with Thy servant David, my father, continuing to fulfil His promises also in the future, that which Thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in My sight to sit upon the throne of Israel, 2 Sam. 7, 12. 16, yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in My Law, as thou hast walked before Me. V. 17. Now, then, O Lord God of Israel, let Thy word be verified which Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant David. Mark that this is the proper and effective way of approaching the Lord, reminding Him of His promises and urging His own faithfulness. V. 18. But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built! The object of Solomon's magnificent Temple was not to confine God to this one building, as the heathen did by erecting shrines for their idols, but to provide a place where His people might worship Him; the Temple was erected not for the Lord, but for the people. V. 19. Have respect, therefore, to the prayer of Thy servant, literally, "turn Thou to the appeal of Thy servant," and to his supplication, O Lord, my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which Thy servant prayeth before Thee, concerning the mode and the effectiveness of the public worship which was to be instituted in this Temple, v. 20. that Thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof Thou hast said that Thou wouldest put Thy name there, in the Word proclaimed and in the prayers offered, to hearken unto the prayer which Thy servant prayeth toward this place, this building being at that time the one Temple in the entire world where the worship of Jehovah was publicly held. V. 21. Hearken therefore unto the supplications of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel which they shall make toward this place; hear Thou from Thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when Thou hearest, forgive, this phase of God's work, the forgiveness of sins, being prominent even at that time, just as all the sacrifices were but types of the great and only true Sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Special types of sins and special occasions of distress are now discussed. V. 22. If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before Thine altar in this house, the reference being to the practise of having men swear by or before the altar, where witnesses were not available, Matt. 23, 20, the oath in that case being equal to an imprecation calling down the curse of God in the event of a false oath, v. 23. then hear Thou from heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head, letting the curse implied in his oath strike him, and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness. V. 24. And if Thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, utterly defeated and put to flight in battle, because they have sinned against Thee, and shall return and confess Thy name, and pray and make supplication before Thee in this house, making their prayer toward this Sanctuary, where the ark of God's presence was stationed, v. 25. then hear Thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which Thou gavest to them and to their fathers. V. 26. When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, droughts of this kind being expressly named as punishments of the Lord upon a disobedient people, because they have sinned against Thee, yet, if they pray toward this place, as was the custom of the Jews in all foreign countries, and confess Thy name and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them, v. 27. then hear Thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy servants and of Thy people Israel when Thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk, if they have learned the lesson intended to be conveyed to them by the Lord's punishment, and send rain upon Thy land which Thou hast given unto Thy people for an inheritance. V. 28. If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be, only a few of the curses being named here which are threatened Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 upon a stubborn and rebellious people, v. 29. then, what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, coming to the knowledge of his sins and grieving over them in true repentance, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, v. 30. then hear Thou from heaven, Thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest, He would be able to judge the sincerity of a man's repentance, (for Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men, since He, the Omniscient One, reads all the thoughts of the heart,) v. 31. that they may fear Thee, to walk in Thy

ways, so long as they live in the land, sustained by the fruit on the face of the land, which Thou gavest unto our fathers. V. 32. Moreover, concerning the stranger, which is not of Thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for Thy great name's sake, becoming a proselyte to the Jewish faith, as, for instance, the eunuch of Queen Candace, Acts 8, 27, and Thy mighty hand, and Thy stretched-out arm; if they come and pray in this house, v. 33. then hear Thou from the heavens, even from Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for, that all people of the earth may know Thy name, becoming acquainted with it through such missionaries, and fear Thee as doth Thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by Thy name, literally, "Thy name is called upon this house," for it was consecrated by the fact that the Word of God was observed and proclaimed there. V. 34. If Thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that Thou shalt send them, and they pray unto Thee, from the country where their expedition might lead them, toward this city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for Thy name, v. 35. then hear Thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication and maintain their cause, giving them the victory over their enemies. V. 36. If they sin against Thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not, that is a principle which has been held in the Church at all times,) and Thou be angry with them and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near, as happened afterward with both divisions of the nation; v. 37. yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto Thee in the land of their captivity, in true repentance over their sins, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly, the formula which was afterward constantly used by the Jews in their public confessions of sins; v. 38. if they return to Thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land which Thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which Thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Thy name, as it is related of Daniel, Dan. 6, 10, v. 39. then hear Thou from the heavens, even from Thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, siding with them in the issue presented, and forgive Thy people which have sinned against Thee. In this way the Temple would become the central Sanctuary of the Jews, the one place where Jehovah's presence would be revealed. V. 40. Now, my God, let, I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and let Thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place, both the present appeal and all prayers that would be made there in the future. For the entire prayer cp. 1 Kings 8, 23—53. V. 41. Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting-place, the fixed and permanent mansion of the Temple, Thou and the ark of Thy strength, from which He would manifest His power in behalf of His people, a solemn summons to the Lord to take formal possession of His Sanctuary. Let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, their white linen garments being expressive of the righteousness and moral beauty which the sacrifices they offered brought to the worshipers, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness, being glad in the possession of the good and shouting for joy. V. 42. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed, namely, from Solomon, who was making this fervent appeal; remember the mercies of David, Thy servant, those promised to him, for whose fulfilment the king pleaded in faithful confidence. We believers of the New Testament have an even safer assurance that God will hear our prayers, if we but call to Him in the name of Jesus; for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.

CHAPTER 7.

The Dedication Ceremonies Completed.

THE SACRIFICES AND THE DOUBLE FESTIVAL. V. 1. Now, when Solomon had made an end of praying, and in response to his appeal, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, which had been prepared beforehand; and the glory of the Lord filled the house, with a supernatural brilliancy, both of these manifestations showing God's approval of Solomon's dedicatory prayer and of the entire festival. V. 2. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, the Sanctuary, because the glory of the Lord, the cloud of supernatural light, had filled the Lord's house, both revealing and concealing Jehovah's presence. V. 3. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, cp. Lev. 9, 24, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, surrounding and filling the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, the mosaic flooring of the court, of ornamental variegated stone, and worshiped, and praised the Lord, saying, in an antiphonal chant

which repeated the song of praise sung by the choir of Levites, **For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.** The attitude of the immense multitude, as that of a single person, was one of intense and adoring worship before the supreme revelation of God. V. 4. **Then the king and all the people,** through the priests, **offered sacrifices before the Lord,** partly on the large altar of burnt offering in the court, partly on special altars erected for that purpose, also in the Court of the Priests. V. 5. **And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep,** 1 Kings 8, 62—64, for there was a great sacrificial meal connected with the dedication. **So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God,** set it apart for His worship by installing the ark in its place and by this solemn service of sacrifice and praise. V. 6. **And the priests waited on their offices,** they performed the service with which they were charged, chiefly the preparation and offering of the sacrificial animals; **the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made to praise the Lord, because His mercy endureth forever,** Ps. 106; 107; 136, **when David praised by their ministry,** 1 Chron. 25; **and the priests sounded trumpets before them,** namely, those delegated for this service, **and all Israel stood.** Cp. chap. 5, 11—13. V. 7. **Moreover, Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord,** consecrated a section of the outer court as a temporary place for the offering of sacrifices; **for there he offered burnt offerings,** to atone for the sins of the people, **and the fat of the peace-offerings,** the meat of which was used in the sacrificial meal, **because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat-offerings,** which accompanied all burnt offerings, **and the fat,** there was not enough room for the almost unbelievably great mass of sacrifices. V. 8. **Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days,** namely, that of dedication, **and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath,** in the extreme North, **unto the river of Egypt,** on the southwestern boundary of the kingdom. V. 9. **And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly,** a service of worship distinguished even above those of the other days; **for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast,** that is, the Feast of Tabernacles, **seven days,** combining the two into one great, joyful festival lasting fourteen days. V. 10. **And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents,** that is, their homes, **glad and merry in heart,** literally, "full of joy and good with reference to the heart," **for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David and to Solomon and to Israel, His people.** V. 11. **Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house,** his own splendid palace; **and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord,** whatever he could think of in the way of greater decorative effects, **and in his own house, he prosperously effected,** having the means to carry out any project which came to his mind. Thus was the dedication completed, and all men went home full of happiness. He who prays, praises, thanks, and sacrifices to the Lord according to his ability will afterward gladly return to his work, with peace in his heart.

THE LORD'S ANSWER TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER. V. 12. **And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer,** the prayer made at the dedication of the Temple, **and have chosen this place to Myself for an house of sacrifice.** V. 13. **If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people,** all these being special punishments of the Lord upon the disobedience of His people at all times; v. 14. **if My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves,** in true repentance, **and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land,** as the body of a person afflicted with severe ulcers. V. 15. **Now, Mine eyes shall be open and Mine ears [be] attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.** V. 16. **For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever,** to be proclaimed by sacrifices, by prayers, and by the singing of the glorious psalms; **and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually,** His eyes to watch over this Sanctuary, and His heart to be united in love with all true believers. V. 17. **And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before Me, as David, thy father, walked,** ordering his whole life according to the divine will, **and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe My statutes and My judgments,** both the precepts of the covenant relation and those of the general relation toward God and men, v. 18. **then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David, thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel,** chap. 6, 16. V. 19. **But if ye turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods and worship them,** in any form of idolatry, v. 20. **then will I pluck them up by the roots,** eradicate them completely, like noxious

weeds, **out of My land which I have given them**, and which they possess merely as stewards or tenants, as all men do in reality; **and this house, which I have sanctified for My name, will I cast out of My sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations**, Deut. 28, 37; Jer. 24, 9. V. 21. **And this house, which is high**, both by reason of its location and its distinction, **shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it, so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land and unto this house?** V. 22. **And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them, and served them; therefore hath He brought all this evil upon them.** Cp. 1 Kings 9, 3—9. The same holds true to-day. A mere dead orthodoxy, without true piety of the heart, will not uphold the Church. Luther's warning regarding the swiftness with which God's pure Word is taken from the people that forsake Him in their hearts may well be heeded even at this time. Believers should never become self-reliant, for let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

CHAPTER 8.

The External Glory of Solomon's Reign.

SOLOMON'S PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND SERFS. — V. 1. **And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the Lord**, the building of the Temple taking seven years, **and his own house**, whose erection took thirteen years, v. 2. **that the cities which Huram had restored to Solomon**, those in Northwestern Galilee, which had been granted to Huram by Solomon, but refused by the Phenician king as unsuitable for the purposes of his chief industries, 1 Kings 9, 11, **Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there**, he colonized these cities with people of his own nation. V. 3. **And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah**, probably a confederacy of two Syrian kingdoms on, and east of, the Orontes, **and prevailed against it**, he overcame the forces of the confederacy whose rulers had in some way provoked his resentment. V. 4. **And he built Tadmor in the wilderness**, later the famous Palmyra of Queen Zenobia, **and all the store-cities, which he built in Hamath**, the fortified towns along the northern frontier, either to further his commercial enterprises or to secure himself against an attack from the north. V. 5. **Also he built Beth-horon the Upper and Beth-horon the Nether**, on the Philistine frontier, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars; v. 6. **and Baalath**, in the same territory, **and all the store-cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot-cities**, some of which were situated in the rich grazing lands in the south, **and the cities of the horsemen**, where his cavalry was stationed, **and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem and in Lebanon**, where he is believed to have had a summer home, **and throughout all the land of his dominion.** V. 7. **As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which were not of Israel**, descendants of the Canaanite nations that occupied the land before the conquest, v. 8. **but of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel**, contrary to the original command of the Lord, **consumed not**, whom the Lord, therefore, left in the country as a perpetual snare to Israel, Judg. 2, 1—3, **them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day**, reduced them to the condition of serfs. V. 9. **But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work**, they were not forced to perform menial tasks; **but they were men of war and chief of his captains and captains of his chariots and horsemen**, they held positions of honor in the army. V. 10. **And these were the chief of King Solomon's officers**, the overseers belonging to Israel only, **even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.** So Solomon showed himself a wise administrator in all the affairs of his kingdom, interested in the welfare and security of his people. His kingdom is a type of the kingdom of Christ with its spiritual, heavenly, eternal blessings.

SOLOMON'S WORSHIP AND NAVIGATION. — V. 11. **And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the City of David unto the house that he had built for her**, a special building of his palace for his chief wife; **for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, king of Israel, because the places are holy whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come.** She had lived in some part of the lower city since her marriage to Solomon, because the king deemed it improper for a former heathen, particularly with servants who were still heathen, to live on the premises where the Tabernacle of David had once stood, which had been hallowed by the presence of the Ark of the Covenant. In a similar manner we set our churches apart from ordinary use, preferably solely for the administration of the means of grace. V. 12. **Then Solomon**, through the priests ordained for that ministry, **offered burnt offerings unto the Lord on the altar of the Lord which he had built before the porch**, just east of the great entrance portico leading to

the Sanctuary, v. 13. even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, above all, the great festivals, three times in the year, even in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles, for all of which the sacrifices were exactly prescribed in the books of Moses. V. 14. And he appointed, according to the order of David, his father, 2 Chron. 24, 25. 26, the courses of the priests to their service, their divisions and the sequence of their ministry having been established by David in solemn assembly, and the Levites to their charges, 1 Chron. 25, 1, to praise and minister before the priests, by assisting them in the various tasks of the Temple, as the duty of every day required; the porters also by their courses at every gate, 1 Chron. 9, 7; 26, 1; for so had David, the man of God, commanded. V. 15. And they departed not from the commandment of the king, that is, of David, unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, in regulating the courses and fixing the tasks, or concerning the treasures, in applying the available precious metals and votive gifts to the construction and adornment of the Temple. V. 16. Now, all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the Lord, and until it was finished, this including the entire fitting up and arrangement of the Temple for divine worship. So the house of the Lord was perfected, made ready in all its parts for the consecrated use for which it was intended. V. 17. Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, at the head of the Elanitic Gulf of the Red Sea, and to Eloth, another port on the same gulf, at the seaside in the land of Edom. Solomon was shrewd enough to see that his country needed more commercial enterprises if it was to become powerful among the nations. V. 18. And Huram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea, seasoned and experienced mariners; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, the location of which is unknown, though it is generally placed on the southeastern coast of Africa, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold (almost $9,000,000), and brought them to King Solomon. That was the regular load of his navy. But all this wealth is as nothing beside the heavenly and eternal glory which the Second Solomon, Jesus Christ, gives to those who are faithful to Him to the end.

CHAPTER 9.

Solomon's Fame and Wealth.

Visit of the Queen of Sheba. — V. 1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, since the caravans from Canaan penetrated into the most remote corners of Arabia and spread the accounts of his great wisdom everywhere, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions, with epigrammatic riddles and conundrums, such as were much used in the Orient, at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones, with all the pomp and splendor so dear to the heart of the Oriental monarch; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart, all the difficult questions which she had prepared beforehand. V. 2. And Solomon told her all her questions, solving all her riddles; and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not. V. 3. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, as shown in his conversation, and the house that he had built, v. 4. and the meat of his table, the amount and the costliness of the food served in the royal palace, and the sitting of his servants, where and how they lived, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel, his cupbearers also and their apparel, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord, the magnificent arched viaduct by which he crossed to the Temple hill, one of the marvels of ancient architecture, with its stairway leading to the higher level, there was no more spirit in her, she was altogether overwhelmed. V. 5. And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, his various enterprises, and of thy wisdom; v. 6. howbeit, I believed not their words, namely, the words of those who brought such glowing reports, until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the one-half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me, for thou exceedest the fame that I heard, it possessed a fulness which she had not considered possible. V. 7. Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom. V. 8. Blessed be the Lord, thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on His throne, Jehovah being the real sovereign of the children of Israel, to be king for the Lord, thy God; because thy God loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore made He thee king over them to do judgment and justice, to adjust cases brought before him, and to dispense justice in accordance with his findings. V. 9. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents

of gold (almost $2,500,000 worth), **and of spices,** of which great amounts were produced in Arabia, **great abundance, and precious stones; neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon,** both the quality and the quantity were unheard of in those days. V. 10. **And the servants also of Huram and the servants of Solomon which brought gold from Ophir,** chap. 8, 18, **brought algum-trees,** sandalwood, **and precious stones.** V. 11. **And the king made of the algum-trees terraces to the house of the Lord and to the king's palace,** raised pavements in beautiful designs, **and harps and psalteries for singers,** for the wood was especially adapted for that purpose; **and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah.** V. 12. **And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which she had brought unto the king,** that is, in addition to the equivalent in gifts in return for those she presented. **So she turned and went away to her own land, she and her servants.** Note: Solomon was wiser than all men, and his wisdom deserved to be praised. But immeasurably greater is the eternal wisdom of the Son of God in the word of the Gospel, a wisdom which teaches the mystery of eternal salvation.

THE IMMENSE WEALTH OF SOLOMON AND HIS DEATH. — V. 13. **Now, the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold** (almost $20,000,000), v. 14. **beside that which chapmen,** traders, especially such as establish commercial connections with new territories, **and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia,** the mighty and wealthy skeikhs of the various tribes of the peninsula, **and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon,** as presents showing their good will. V. 15. **And King Solomon made two hundred targets,** a special kind of shield, **of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one target** (approximately $2,000 worth). V. 16. **And three hundred shields,** of a smaller size, **made he of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold,** or three full pounds, 1 Kings 10, 17, **went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon,** the great armory just before his palace. V. 17. **Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold.** V. 18. **And there were six steps to the throne,** leading up to the seat itself, **with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays,** arm-rests, **on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by the stays;** v. 19. **and twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like,** for uniqueness and costliness, **made in any kingdom.** V. 20. **And all the drinking-vessels of King Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver; it was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon,** being so plentiful and so common that it lost its value as a precious metal. V. 21. **For the king's ships,** the navy on the Mediterranean Sea, **went to Tarshish,** the rich mining region of Spain, **with the servants of Huram; every three years once came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory,** in the form of elephants' tusks, **and apes, and peacocks.** The words may also be construed as referring to Tarshish-ships, large vessels built for ocean trade, such as were sent out from Ezion-gaber and Elath. V. 22. **And King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth,** of all the countries known at that time, **in riches and wisdom.** V. 23. **And all the kings of the earth,** those in the world as known then, **sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart.** V. 24. **And they brought every man his present,** showing their good will and regard, **vessels of silver and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year,** the bringing of these gifts being made an annual affair. V. 25. **And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots,** for a total of forty thousand horses, 1 Kings 4, 26, **and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the chariot-cities and with the king at Jerusalem.** V. 26. **And he reigned over all the kings from the river,** that is, from the Euphrates, **even unto the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt,** all the kingdoms and tribes in that entire region being tributary to his kingdom at that time. V. 27. **And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones,** so common and therefore comparatively low in value, **and cedar-trees made he as the sycomore-trees that are in the low plains in abundance,** chap. 1, 15; 1 Kings 10, 27. V. 28. **And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt and out of all lands,** 1 Kings 10, 28. So Solomon undoubtedly carried the Hebrew kingdom to its highest pinnacle of worldly glory and power, and his centralizing of the worship served to unify the nation as never before or after. At the same time, however, the luxury introduced by him served to enervate the people and to have a bad influence on the character of the entire nation. V. 29. **Now, the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the Book of Nathan, the prophet, and in the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the Visions of Iddo, the seer, against Jeroboam, the son of Nebat?** It seems that the inspired writer drew from

these accounts for his information, being guided herein by the Holy Spirit, the real Author of the Bible. V. 30. **And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.** V. 31. **And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the City of David, his father,** in the place afterward known as the sepulchers of the kings; **and Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead.** All the wealth, honor, and wisdom of this world is vain and vanishing. The safest thing is to place one's trust in the Word and promises of God, faith in which will carry each believer through death into eternal life beyond.

CHAPTER 10.

The Division of the Kingdom.

THE DEMAND OF THE NORTHERN TRIBES. — V. 1. **And Rehoboam went to Shechem,** one of the chief cities of the northern tribes and almost in the center of Canaan; **for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.** Cp. 1 Kings 12. V. 2. **And it came to pass, when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king,** after the prophet Ahijah had promised Jeroboam the position as king of the northern tribes, 1 Kings 11, 40, **heard it,** received information of this move to make Rehoboam king, **that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.** V. 3. **And they sent and called him,** the people of the northern tribes had sent him word, because he was an influential man, and because some of them may have known of Ahijah's promise. **So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,** stating the conditions under which they would accept him as their king, v. 4. **Thy father made our yoke grievous,** by heavy taxes and by other burdens which he had deemed necessary for his ambitious plans, although they had redounded to the welfare of the nation as such; **now, therefore, ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father and his heavy yoke that he put upon us,** reducing its pressing burden to some extent, **and we will serve thee.** V. 5. **And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days.** He wanted time to consider their proposition from every angle. **And the people departed.** V. 6. **And King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon, his father, while he yet lived,** tried and experienced counselors, **saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?** V. 7. **And they,** out of the fulness of their ripe experience, **spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants forever.** It is doubtful whether the northern tribes would have remained loyal even with this soft answer returned to them, but at any rate it would have taken from them every pretext for separation. V. 8. **But he,** inexperienced, imperious, and tyrannically inclined, **forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him,** having always been surrounded with the pomp, power, and luxury of magnificent court life and therefore regarding the common people as a herd for bearing burdens, **that stood before him.** V. 9. **And he said unto them, What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?** V. 10. **And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him,** in the arrogant manner which he evidently liked, **saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it somewhat lighter for us,** a contemptuous repetition of the people's demand; **thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.** V. 11. **For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you,** loading a very grievous burden upon them, **I will put more to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips,** figuratively speaking, **but I will chastise you with scorpions,** a whip with many thongs, whose ends were weighted with sharp points, used for punishing slaves. It is a blessing to a country if its ruler surrounds himself with experienced, trustworthy counselors, who will give the best advice at the right time. But woe to the land whose ruler chooses men as counselors who are out of touch with the needs of the country!

THE REVOLT OF ISRAEL. — V. 12. **So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.** V. 13. **And the king answered them roughly,** in a violent and haughty manner; **and King Rehoboam,** headstrong as he was, **forsook the counsel of the old men,** v. 14. **and answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.** V. 15. **So the king hearkened not unto the people;** for the cause was of God, He it was that arranged matters in this manner, **that the Lord might perform His word which He spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,** 1 Kings 11, 29. The weakness and inexperience

of Rehoboam, his utter want of common sense, and his judicial blindness was made use of by the Lord in bringing upon the house of Solomon the punishment for the latter's idolatry. V. 16. **And when all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them,** stubbornly refusing to listen to their appeal, **the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David, the dynasty of Judah? And we have none inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel! And now, David,** that is, the house of David, the reigning family of Judah, **see to thine own house!** It was a quiet, but determined declaration of withdrawal, showing the scorn and derision which the people of the northern tribes felt for the foolishness of Rehoboam. **So all Israel went to their tents,** thus accomplishing the rebellion with all quietness. V. 17. **But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah,** including the Simeonites and the tribe of Benjamin, **Rehoboam reigned over them.** V. 18. **Then King Rehoboam,** apparently unaware of the seriousness of the situation and of the accomplished revolt, **sent Hadoram, that was over the tribute,** his chief tax-gatherer; **and the children of Israel,** to show that they were in dead earnest, **stoned him with stones that he died.** This occurred while Rehoboam was still staying in Shechem. **But King Rehoboam made speed,** he used all energy, **to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem,** since the seriousness of the situation now finally dawned upon him. V. 19. **And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day,** to the time that the account was written from which our author took his information. Note: Tyranny is usually followed by disintegration. Mark also: The sins of men are acts of their perverted will, yet God often makes use of the situations due to men's perversions, in the natural course of events, to carry out His plans.

CHAPTER 11.

Incidents of Rehoboam's Reign.

REHOBOAM'S ARMY AND FORTS. — V. 1. **And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem,** after fleeing from Shechem, **he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors,** veteran soldiers, **to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam,** he wanted to make the rebels submit to his authority by force of arms. V. 2. **But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, the man of God,** saying, v. 3. **Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin,** that is, the entire assembled army, saying, v. 4. **Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up nor fight against your brethren,** for such they were, in spite of their rebellion. **Return every man to his house; for this thing is done of Me,** the rebellion had been accomplished by His express permission. **And they obeyed the words of the Lord, and returned from going against Jeroboam.** The army, fearing the divine prohibition, dispersed, and the king was obliged to submit. V. 5. **And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem,** which continued to be the capital of the southern nation, **and built cities for defense in Judah,** since he, in the present weakened state of his kingdom, feared both the northern tribes and other powerful neighbors. V. 6. **He built even Bethlehem, and Etam, and Tekoa,** as outposts of Jerusalem toward the south, v. 7. **and Beth-zur, and Shoco, and Adullam,** v. 8. **and Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph,** v. 9. **and Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah,** all these cities being toward the southwest, toward Egypt, and in the west, toward Philistia, v. 10. **and Zorah, and Aijalon,** cities originally belonging to Dan, but now to Benjamin, near the northern border of his dominion, **and Hebron,** the ancient city in the south central part of the Judean country, **which are in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities.** V. 11. **And he fortified the strongholds,** making use of their natural location in making them strong fortresses, **and put captains in them,** experienced commanders, **and store of victual, and of oil and wine,** military stores sufficient to enable the garrison to withstand a siege. V. 12. **And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong,** able to withstand the offensive of a strong attacking force, **having Judah and Benjamin on his side,** these two tribes, as a political division, forming his nation. In all this the promise of God to David was fulfilled; for He had assured him the continuation of his dynasty on the throne of Judah.

REHOBOAM'S WORSHIP, IDOLATRY, AND FAMILY. V. 13. **And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts,** thus giving Rehoboam a great increase of moral power, for they placed themselves at his disposal. V. 14. **For the Levites left their suburbs,** the commons or pasture-grounds assigned to them, **and their possession,** namely, those in the cities set apart for them in the various northern tribes, **and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord,** since he, for reasons of policy, wanted to keep the members of the northern tribes from journeying to Jerusalem, especially for the three great festivals, 1 Kings 12, 26—30;

v. 15. **and he**, Jeroboam, **ordained him priests for the high places**, such as were not of the tribe of Levi, 1 Kings 12, 31, **and for the devils**, a term sometimes used for idols in general, Lev. 17, 7, **and for the calves which he had made**, 1 Kings 12, 28, the abominable idols of Bethel and Dan which caused Israel to sin. V. 16. **And after them**, namely, the priests and Levites who remained faithful to the true God, **out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers**; being forbidden to do so in their own country, in the midst of their native tribe, they emigrated and settled in Jerusalem, where the true worship was still practised until Rehoboam, too, forsook the Lord, chap. 12, 1. V. 17. **So they**, coming in considerable numbers, **strengthened the kingdom of Judah**, both numerically and morally, **and made Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, strong three years; for three years they**, all the people of the southern nation, including the newcomers, **walked in the way of David and Solomon**. Afterwards, when foreign and idolatrous customs were encouraged by Rehoboam, the accession of pious Israelites from the neighboring kingdom ceased. V. 18. **And Rehoboam took him Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth, the son of David, to wife**, apparently the daughter of a concubine's son, **and Abihail, the daughter of Eliab, the son of Jesse**, his cousin; v. 19. **which bare him children: Jeush and Shamariah and Zaham**. V. 20. **And after her he took Maachah, the daughter of Absalom**, in the wider sense, for she was Absalom's granddaughter, by his daughter Tamar, 2 Sam. 14, 27; **which bare him Abijah and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith**. V. 21. **And Rehoboam loved Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, above all his wives and his concubines** (**for he took eighteen wives and threescore concubines, having a full harem according to Oriental custom, and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters**). V. 22. **And Rehoboam made Abijah, the son of Maachah, his most beloved wife, the chief, to be ruler among his brethren**, he designated him as his successor; **for he thought to make him king**. V. 23. **And he dealt wisely**, with prudent foresight, **and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city**, making them officers of fortresses, laying responsibility upon them and keeping them out of mischief, into which they might have fallen if they had been idle in Jerusalem; **and he gave them victual in abundance**, thus providing for them also in this respect and obviating dissatisfaction. **And he desired many wives**, namely, for his sons, he arranged marriages for them with the daughters of the land, thus making them contented and establishing firmer connections between his house and the people of the country. In a way, at least, Rehoboam hereby redeemed the mistake made at the beginning of his reign.

CHAPTER 12.

Rehoboam Punished by Shishak of Egypt.

Rehoboam Subdued by Shishak. — V. 1. **And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself**, his encouragement of the right worship of Jehovah bringing him many people from the northern kingdom, chap. 11, 16. 17, and causing his undertakings to be attended by the blessings of God, **he forsook the Law of the Lord, and all Israel with him**, luxury, security, and ease led to religious decline, an experience which is not unusual, and the people in his own kingdom very readily followed him in his apostasy, thereby causing the designation "Israelites" to be applied to them, to their shame and disgrace. V. 2. **And it came to pass that in the fifth year of King Rehoboam**, the very next year after his defection, **Shishak, king of Egypt**, stirred up probably by Jeroboam, with whom he was united in friendship, 1 Kings 11, 40, **came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the Lord**, the punishment of Jehovah coming upon the apostate king and people very quickly in this case, v. 3. **with twelve hundred chariots and threescore thousand horsemen**, his cavalry being the strongest part of his army; **and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt**, a vast horde: **the Lubims**, the Libyans of the country northwest of Egypt proper, **the Sukkiims**, probably the inhabitants of the mountains of Eastern Egypt, **and the Ethiopians**, the Abyssinians, all of these being allies of the Egyptian king. V. 4. **And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah**, the fortresses built by Rehoboam proving too weak to withstand the onslaught of his immense forces, **and came to Jerusalem**. V. 5. **Then came Shemaiah, the prophet**, the same man who had issued the warning against civil war, chap. 11, 3, **to Rehoboam and to the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak**, having sought the security of the capital before the advance of the Egyptian army, **and said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken Me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak**, the calamity which had befallen them was directly due to their apostasy, and therefore they might ex-

pect the subjection of their entire country if they continued in their evil way. V. 6. **Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves,** they acknowledged their transgression in deep humility and contrition; **and they said, The Lord is righteous,** they admitted the justice of the punishment which He had sent upon them. V. 7. **And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves,** that their repentance was of the right kind, **the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves,** the Lord, who searches the heart, saw the sincerity of their sorrow; **therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance,** let relief come to them to some extent; **and My wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak,** the capital would not be entirely destroyed at this time. V. 8. **Nevertheless, they shall be his servants,** be tributary to him for a while, **that they may know My service,** realize that true service of the Lord requires all the heart at all times, **and the service of the kingdoms of the countries,** finding out what the oppressive rule of a heathen sovereign meant. V. 9. **So Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem,** the capital being obliged to open its gates to him, **and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house; he took all,** many millions of dollars worth of precious metals. **He carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made,** 1 Kings 10, 16. 17, whose value has been estimated at between $1,200,000 and $1,500,000. V. 10. **Instead of which King Rehoboam made shields of brass,** of inferior metal, but brightly burnished, **and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard that kept the entrance of the king's house,** ready for use, especially on public and solemn occasions. V. 11. **And when the king entered into the house of the Lord,** by a special gate leading there from his palace, **the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard-chamber.** V. 12. **And when he humbled himself,** proved that his repentance was of the right and lasting kind, **the wrath of the Lord turned from him that He would not destroy him altogether,** His promise thus being made true and the kingdom preserved in existence; **and also in Judah things went well,** literally, "and also in Judah there were good things," many of the people serving the Lord in all sincerity, with good works, such as pleased Him. The Lord is long-suffering and of tender mercies and glad to turn back to His children in kindness if they will but acknowledge their transgressions in true sorrow.

REHOBOAM'S REIGN AND DEATH. — V. 13. **So King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem,** having repented of his sins, he could clear his land of the invaders in the course of time, **and reigned; for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there,** which He had intended for the central Sanctuary for the entire people of Israel. **And his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess,** who, by reason of the harem system, had more influence over him than would otherwise have been the case. V. 14. **And he did evil,** that was the general impression of his reign, **because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord,** he did not adhere with all strictness and with unvarying sincerity to the reformation which he had begun; he kept his tendency toward idolatry, due chiefly to the influence of his mother. V. 15. **Now, the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the Book of Shemaiah, the prophet, and of Iddo, the seer, concerning genealogies?** These were the sources from which the sacred historian, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, got his information. **And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually;** although there were no battles or armed clashes, they were in a hostile frame of mind toward each other. V. 16. **And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried in the City of David; and Abijah,** his son, selected by his father as his successor, **reigned in his stead.** Note: Apostasy from God has ever resulted in quarrels, wars, and misfortunes of every kind. Therefore we of these latter days should heed His warnings all the more carefully and serve our Lord with all sincerity of heart.

CHAPTER 13.

War between Abijah and Jeroboam.

ABIJAH'S WARNING TO ISRAEL. — V. 1. **Now, in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam,** Rehoboam having died after a reign of fully seventeen years, **began Abijah to reign over Judah.** V. 2. **He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Michaiah** (or Maachah, chap. 11, 20), **the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah,** who had married Tamar, the daughter of Absalom. **And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam,** not merely a state of hostility, where each side rested on its arms, but actual, bitter warfare. V. 3. **And Abijah,** apparently in an effort to regain the northern territory for the house of David, **set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war,** experienced, veteran troops, **even four hundred**

thousand chosen men, for most men in those days were trained in the use of arms. **Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valor.** It was civil war in dead earnest, with no prophet interfering in behalf of Israel, since Jeroboam, on account of his idolatry, had forfeited all claims for protection. V. 4. **And Abijah stood up upon Mount Zemaraim, which is in Mount Ephraim,** probably in the neighborhood of Bethel, **and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam and all Israel!** V. 5. **Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever,** 2 Sam. 7, 12—16, **even to him and to his sons, by a covenant of salt?** He pictured the covenant as an unchangeable and irrevocable promise on the part of Jehovah, substantiated by the meat-offering, which was always prepared with salt, Lev. 2, 13; Num. 18, 19. V. 6. **Yet Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon, the son of David, is risen up and hath rebelled against his lord,** Jeroboam thus being represented as a miserable usurper, who had taken advantage of Rehoboam's youth and inexperience. V. 7. **And there are gathered unto him vain men,** literally, "sons of worthlessness," **the children of Belial,** vain, useless fellows, loose, fickle, and unreliable, **and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted and could not withstand them,** they showed themselves strong against him while he was as yet unstable and unable to resist them. V. 8. **And now ye think to withstand,** by making themselves strong, **the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods,** this being a sharp censure of the gross idolatry which now had official recognition in the northern kingdom, 1 Kings 12, 28. V. 9. **Have ye not,** in consequence of the gross idolatry introduced by Jeroboam, **cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites,** all these having been put out of office and expelled from the country when Jeroboam selected priests for his cult who were not of the sons of Levi, 1 Kings 12, 31; chap. 11, 14, **and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands, so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams,** changing the requirements of the law also in this respect and making it a priesthood of ungods, Ex. 29; Deut. 32, 21, **the same may be a priest of them that are no gods?** V. 10. **But as for us,** the members of the southern nation, **the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken Him,** the pure and regular observance of the true religion was found only in Judah; **and the priests which minister unto the Lord are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business;** v. 11. **and they burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; the showbread also set they in order upon the pure table,** the special table overlaid with gold in the Holy Place, **and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof to burn every evening; for we keep the charge of the Lord, our God,** performing all the acts of public worship in strict conformity with His regulations; **but ye have forsaken Him.** V. 12. **And, behold, God Himself is with us for our Captain,** the army of Judah had placed itself entirely under His leadership and protection, **and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you,** for that was one of the functions of the priests, to sound the clanging trumpets and thereby call upon the Lord to help His people in war, Num. 10, 9. Abijah ended with one last fervent appeal: **O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.** It is only where the Word of God is the lamp to a community or nation that He will truly bless and prosper the people.

THE DEFEAT OF JEROBOAM. —V. 13. **But Jeroboam,** while Abijah harangued his army from his elevated station, **caused an ambushment to come about behind them,** to surprise the army of Judah in the rear; **so they,** the main division of Israel's army, **were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.** V. 14. **And when Judah looked back,** their attention having been called to the enemy's detachment in their rear, **behold, the battle was before and behind. And they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets,** this being the pledge of victory and intended to reassure the soldiers of Judah. V. 15. **Then the men of Judah,** filled with new courage by the well-known signal, **gave a shout,** their war-cry combining with the sound of the trumpets; **and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.** It is particularly emphasized that the ranks of Israel were broken due to the interference of Jehovah in behalf of Judah. V. 16. **And the children of Israel fled before Judah; and God delivered them into their hand.** V. 17. **And Abijah and his people,** inflamed by the usual passions of civil war, **slew them with a great slaughter; so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.** V. 18. **Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time,** defeated and humbled, also weakened by their terrible loss of armed men, **and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers,** and not on account of their own invincible valor.

V. 19. **And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him: Bethel with the towns thereof, the hamlets surrounding it, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephrain with the towns thereof,** all border cities which, strictly speaking, belonged to the territory of Judah and Benjamin. V. 20. **Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah,** he could not recover from the awful blow which had been struck; **and the Lord struck him, and he died,** not snatching him away by a sudden death, but visiting him with misfortune and heaping one blow after another upon him, so that he outlived Abijah by only two years, 1 Kings 14, 20; 15, 9. V. 21. **But Abijah,** as long as he adhered to the Lord alone, **waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons and sixteen daughters,** this, of course, having taken place before he became king, long before the war with Jeroboam. V. 22. **And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo,** which is mentioned elsewhere also as a source from which the sacred writer drew. We who, by the grace of God, have His pure Word and Sacraments, should heed the warning contained in this history and beware of apostasy.

CHAPTER 14.

Chief Events of Asa's Reign.

ASA'S PIETY AND MILITARY PROWESS. — V. 1. **So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David; and Asa, his son, reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years,** an interval of peace following the battle of Zemaraim, giving Asa the opportunity of effecting many needed improvements. V. 2. **And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord, his God,** 1 Kings 15, 11—14; v. 3. **for he took away the altars of the strange gods,** those which had been introduced from foreign, heathen nations, **and the high places,** for it was on the hills that the places of worship to idols were erected, **and brake down the images,** memorial stones erected to Baal, **and cut down the groves,** the wooden posts and sacred trees dedicated to Astarte, the female idol of the Canaanites, v. 4. **and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the Law and the commandment,** both in its entirety and in its individual precepts. V. 5. **Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images,** the statues before the altars of Baal, consecrated to him as the sun-god; **and the kingdom was quiet before him,** although he was by no means free from faults, chap. 16, 7—12. V. 6. **And he built fenced cities in Judah,** the fortifications erected by Rehoboam having probably been destroyed during the invasion by Shishak; **for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years, because the Lord had given him rest.** V. 7. **Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities,** the list surely including Geba and Mispah, **and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us,** while it was not occupied by foes nor threatened by invasion, while they were still unhampered in their movements, **because we have sought the Lord, our God; we have sought Him, and He hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered,** the Lord Himself keeping all misfortune away from them at that time. V. 8. **And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears,** not all professional soldiers, but able to bear arms and ready to enter the service at any time, **out of Judah three hundred thousand, and out of Benjamin that bare shields and drew bows two hundred and fourscore thousand. All these were mighty men of valor.** There is a hint here for application to spiritual matters, namely, not to become secure and careless in days when Satan is less active than usual against the Church, but to be prepared at all times to meet his onslaughts.

THE DEFEAT OF THE ETHIOPIANS. — V. 9. **And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian,** either a Cushite king of Arabia or a mighty Ethiopian king, who, as history relates, invaded the southwest of Egypt and of Asia, **with an host of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots,** an immense army, filled with the lust of conquest; **and came unto Mareshah,** a fortified town in the lowlands of Judah. V. 10. **Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the Valley of Zephathah,** between Hebron and Ashdod, **at Mareshah.** V. 11. **And Asa cried unto the Lord, his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power,** he had the firm confidence that the almighty power of God was independent of the armed forces of man, no matter what their number was. **Help us, O Lord, our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude,** which outnumbered his whole army almost two to one. **O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee,** mere mortal man, in this case, being represented by the horde which threatened to overwhelm the army of Judah. V. 12. **So the Lord,** in answer to Asa's prayer, **smote the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah; and the Ethiopians**

fied. V. 13. **And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar,** the ancient Philistine city southeast of Gaza; **and the Ethiopians were overthrown that they could not recover themselves,** they fell beyond the hope of rallying their forces; **for they were destroyed before the Lord,** broken like a piece of glass or fragile pottery, **and before His host,** for so Asa's army is called as the instrument of the divine justice and wrath against the enemy, **and they,** the soldiers of Judah, **carried away very much spoil.** V. 14. **And they smote all the cities round about Gerar,** the Philistines, as usual, probably having made common cause with the Cushites; **for the fear of the Lord came upon them,** the inhabitants of this entire region. **And they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.** V. 15. **They smote also the tents of cattle,** the herds of the nomad tribes in the northwestern part of Paran, bordering upon the Philistine country, **and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.** Those who trust in the Lord with all their heart shall never be ashamed, for His blessing and protection is always near them.

CHAPTER 15.

Asa's Firm Stand against Idolatry.

IDOLATRY ERADICATED.—V. 1. **And the Spirit of God,** who is also the Spirit of prophecy, **came upon Azariah, the son of Oded,** otherwise unknown; v. 2. **and he went out to meet Asa,** upon the latter's return from his victorious pursuit of the Ethiopians, **and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin,** the entire army: **The Lord is with you while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you,** a maxim which is held out at other times too; **but if ye forsake Him, he will forsake you,** chap. 24, 20. V. 3. **Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God and without a teaching priest and without Law.** The words rather refer to the future, in a prophecy of warning: Many days will be to Israel without the true God, the statement being intended to influence the people to put that time off as far as possible. V. 4. **But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel and sought Him, He was found of them.** This happened time and again in the later history of Judah. The description of the lamentable effects of the future apostasy is now continued. V. 5. **And in those times there was,** rather, there will be, **no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in,** no free, unhindered, peaceful intercourse within the nation, **but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries,** confusion and conflict upon all the provinces of Israel on account of the attitude of the neighboring hostile nations. V. 6. **And nation was destroyed of nation,** literally, "nation shall be smitten of nation," **and city of city; for God did vex them,** rather, will vex them, **with all adversity.** These words were fulfilled in a very striking manner at the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and even before, when the Egyptian rulers came up at their pleasure and ravaged the land. V. 7. **Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak,** a consecrated perseverance would be necessary in overcoming all the dangers which were held out for the future; **for your work shall be rewarded.** Hands that become slack in the service of the Lord are useless for the purposes of His kingdom. V. 8. **And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded, the prophet,** that is, of the son of Oded, v. 1, **he took courage,** he was filled with a holy zeal and bravery, **and put away the abominable idols,** the statues and pillars of the heathen gods and goddesses, **out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim,** for he was probably an officer of his father in the war with Israel, chap. 13, 19, **and renewed the altar of the Lord that was before the porch of the Lord,** chap. 4, 1; 6, 12, by repairing and embellishing it. V. 9. **And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh,** such as had settled in Judah when idolatry was officially introduced in Israel, **and out of Simeon,** for the members of this tribe had also become addicted to idolatry; **for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance when they saw that the Lord, his God, was with him.** Note: Even to-day men and women in all walks of life, seeing how plainly the Lord blesses the pure preaching of the Word, are gained for the truth and openly confess it before men.

THE TRUE WORSHIP RESTORED. — V. 10. **So they,** all those mentioned as having been gained by Asa's reformatory measures, **gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa,** for a great festival of confession and thanksgiving. V. 11. **And they offered unto the Lord the same time,** in the course of that festival, **of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep,** the thanksgiving festival most likely being combined with the great Feast of Pentecost. V. 12. **And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul,** to be united with Him in the

bonds of the closest love and service and loyalty, v. 13. **that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great,** possessing influence and power or not, **whether man or woman,** as the Law of the Lord required, Deut. 13, 5. 9. 15. V. 14. **And they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice and with shouting,** in a solemn chant, **and with trumpets and with cornets,** instruments used for the Temple music. V. 15. **And all Judah,** in a solemn enthusiasm amounting almost to ecstasy, **rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart,** it was not a mere confession of the lips, **and sought Him with their whole desire; and He was found of them. And the Lord gave them rest round about,** he rewarded their piety by granting the blessing of peace. V. 16. **And also concerning Maachah, the mother,** that is, the grandmother, **of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen,** she no longer could hold the position as dowager, **because she had made an idol in a grove,** erected a statue to the heathen goddess Astarte. **And Asa cut down her idol,** the wooden post consecrated to the female goddess, **and stamped it,** or crushed it, probably by cutting it up into little pieces, **and burned it at the brook Kidron.** V. 17. **But the high places were not taken away out of Israel,** that is, the buildings which had been erected as houses of worship on the hills; **nevertheless, the heart of Asa was perfect all his days,** devoted to the Lord in true loyalty. V. 18. **And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated,** set apart as votive gifts, **and that he himself had dedicated, silver and gold and vessels,** of the booty taken from the Ethiopians. V. 19. **And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.** The fact that peace in the land is a gift of God's goodness often is overlooked by men; nevertheless, it is He who alone controls the hearts of men for peace or war.

CHAPTER 16.

Last Events of Asa's Reign.

ASA'S LEAGUE WITH DAMASCUS. — V. 1. **In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa,** or, more exactly, so many years after the division of the kingdom, in Asa's sixteenth year, **Baasha, king of Israel,** the successor of Nadab, who followed Jeroboam, **came up against Judah and built Ramah,** on his southern boundary, about six miles north of Jerusalem, **to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa, king of Judah,** since the prosperity of Judah and the purity of its religious worship were attracting people from the northern kingdom in increasing numbers. Cp. 1 Kings 15, 16—22. V. 2. **Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king's house,** a part of the immense sums gathered by David and Solomon, **and sent to Benhadad, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,** v. 3. **There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father,** for the Syrian kingdoms had apparently ceased to be tributary to the Jews after the division of the kingdom; **behold, I have sent thee silver and gold,** namely, with the present embassy, which he had taken from the treasuries of Jerusalem; **go, break thy league with Baasha, king of Israel, that he may depart from me.** V. 4. **And Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa,** induced to do so by the greatness of the present sent to him, **and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel,** to divert Baasha from his purpose by an attack on his country; **and they smote Ijon, and Dan,** two cities on the extreme northern border of Israel, **and Abelmaim,** or, Abel-beth-maachah, situated on a marshy plain near the sources of Jordan, **and all the store-cities of Naphtali,** probably such cities in which the surplus of grain was stored. V. 5. **And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah,** and therewith his hostile undertaking against Judah, **and let his work cease.** It was never resumed, for his death occurred shortly afterwards. V. 6. **Then Asa the king took all Judah,** he assembled all able-bodied men; **and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timber thereof wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah,** he fortified cities on his own border. It was a weakness of Asa to place his trust in the king of Syria. But to this day the danger is great for believers to turn from the Lord in the hour of distress and trouble and to rely upon weak, mortal men.

ASA REPROVED BY HANANI. — V. 7. **And at that time Hanani, the seer, came to Asa, king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria,** placing his trust in flesh, **and not relied on the Lord, thy God,** for whom it would have been an easy matter to find a way of deliverance, **therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand,** he had lost the opportunity of a victory over the combined forces of Israel and Syria. V. 8. **Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host,** chap. 14, 9; 12, 3, **with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, He delivered them**

into thine hand. This experience should have strengthened Asa's faith to such an extent that he would not have thought of making use of the political tricks wherewith he had shown a lack of trust in Jehovah. V. 9. **For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth,** He is the omniscient and omnipresent God, **to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him,** who cling to Him with undivided loyalty. His mighty help has never yet abandoned His children. **Herein thou hast done foolishly,** acted like a fool, without proper understanding; **therefore from henceforth,** as a punishment for this lack of trust, **thou shalt have wars.** Both Asa and his successors were entangled in the quarrels of the great powers which were neighbors to Judah. V. 10. **Then Asa,** adding to his foolishness, **was wroth with the seer and put him in a prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing.** His pride was offended, he resented the frankness of the prophet. **And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time,** he vented his spite also on others of whom he knew or thought that they agreed in the censure of the prophet. V. 11. **And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last,** a full account of his reign, **lo, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.** V. 12. **And Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet,** probably with the gout or a similar sickness, **until his disease was exceeding great,** literally, "till it reached a great height," either because it slowly spread upward through his body, or because the pain was exceedingly severe; **yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.** His transgression did not consist in his consulting good medical skill, but in placing his trust in these men without first and primarily consulting the Lord, since without His blessing the greatest skill of physicians is useless. V. 13. **And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign,** having, as it seems, returned to a better state of mind. V. 14. **And they buried him in his own sepulchers, which he had made for himself in the City of David,** very likely excavated in the side of a rock, according to the custom then in use, **and laid him in the bed, which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices,** very costly embalming compounds, **prepared by the apothecaries' art; and they made a very great burning for him,** of the sweet-smelling substances mentioned, an honor which was shown especially to such kings as were held in general love and esteem, Jer. 34, 5. Asa, it seems, returned to the Lord in true repentance before his death, 1 Kings 15, 24. God has patience with the weakness of His children and brings them back from their ways of error.

CHAPTER 17.

Beginning of Jehoshaphat's Reign.

Jehoshaphat's Piety. — V. 1. **And Jehoshaphat, his son, reigned in his stead and strengthened himself against Israel,** for the behavior of the kings of Israel made it advisable to adopt proper measures of defense against the northern kingdom, both in strengthening the fortresses and in increasing the army. V. 2. **And he placed forces, strong garrisons, in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah,** military posts with special governors or trusted officers, **and in the cities of Ephraim,** those which had been taken by Judah, chap. 15, 8, **which Asa, his father, had taken.** V. 3. **And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father David,** as this great king of Judah had behaved in the early part of his reign, before the matter of Bathsheba, **and sought not unto Baalim,** did not become guilty of idolatry in any form, v. 4. **but sought to the Lord God of his father,** made the worship of the true God the purpose of his life, **and walked in His commandments and not after the doings of Israel,** in the matter of the abominable calf-worship, 1 Kings 12, 28. V. 5. **Therefore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand,** 2 Kings 14, 5; **and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents,** as was customary at the beginning of a new king's reign; **and he had riches and honor in abundance,** the presents of his subjects were made in proportion to the estimation in which they held him. V. 6. **And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord,** it was so full of faith and piety that it was exalted above the lowness and meanness of idolatry and wilful transgressions. **Moreover, he took away the high places,** those consecrated to Baal, **and groves,** the wooden pillars devoted to Astarte, **out of Judah.** It seems that the people resorted to idolatry just as soon as any king became lax in his insistence upon the true worship alone. V. 7. **Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah,** in an extraordinary visitation of the district to find out the status of the knowledge of the Law. V. 8. **And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and**

Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests, who were, of course, the directors of the course. V. 9. **And they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them;** for copies of the books of Moses were available, probably even the original copy, which was rediscovered under Josiah, three hundred years later, **and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people,** giving them all the information concerning the civil and religious precepts as contained in the book which was even then known as the Law of Jehovah. It is well-pleasing to the Lord if the rulers of a country exercise justice and judgment, maintain discipline and order, and perform all the tasks of their office in such a way as to promote peace and prosperity.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S RICHES, VALOR, AND MIGHTY MEN. — V. 10. **And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat,** namely, while these reformatory measures were being carried out. V. 11. **Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents,** voluntarily placing themselves under his jurisdiction as tributaries, **and tribute silver; and the Arabians,** the nomad tribes to the south and southeast of the Dead Sea, **brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams and seven thousand and seven hundred he-goats,** apparently the tale of so many herds of cattle. V. 12. **And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly,** he became ever greater in riches and power; **and he built in Judah castles,** single fortified palaces, **and cities of store,** where food was stored against the event of a war. V. 13. **And he had much business in the cities of Judah,** great stores of food and material; **and the men of war, mighty men of valor, were in Jerusalem.** V. 14. **And these are the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers,** the divisions known as father-houses: **Of Judah, the captains of thousands: Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valor, three hundred thousand.** V. 15. **And next to him,** next in rank, **was Jehohanan, the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand.** V. 16. **And next him was Amasiah, the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the Lord; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor,** the total number of men in Judah available for purposes of war being 780,000. V. 17. **And of Benjamin: Eliada, a mighty man of valor, and with him armed men with bow and shield,** the Benjamites having always been famed as archers, **two hundred thousand.** V. 18. **And next him was Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand, ready prepared for the war,** the total number from Benjamin being 380,000. V. 19. **These waited on the king,** they were at his disposal, **beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah,** the garrisons of all the fortresses. No monarch, after the time of Solomon, equaled Jehoshaphat in the greatness of his revenue, in the strength of his forts, and in the number of his troops. Note: Whenever people returned to the Word of God in all its purity and readily learned and followed it, conditions became better, and God's blessings rested upon the entire country.

CHAPTER 18.

Jehoshaphat an Ally of Ahab.

JEHOSHAPHAT CONSULTS PROPHETS. — V. 1. **Now, Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance,** as described in detail in the preceding chapter, **and joined affinity with Ahab,** entered into a formal league or alliance with him, which was cemented, moreover, by the marriage of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. But neither the league nor the matrimonial alliance which brought the two reigning houses into closer union met with the approval of the Lord, chap. 19, 2. V. 2. **And after certain years,** at the end of nine years, **he went down to Ahab to Samaria,** for a formal visit. **And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance and for the people,** his entire retinue of courtiers and servants, **that he had with him,** entertaining Jehoshaphat with the most lavish hospitality, **and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-gilead.** This was the real object which Ahab tried to push upon the occasion of this visit, to interest Jehoshaphat in a campaign against Ramoth-gilead, which the Syrians were either holding or else were endeavoring to get into their power again, 1 Kings 22, 3. V. 3. **And Ahab, king of Israel, said unto Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he,** flattered by the banquets which had been prepared in his honor, and the hospitality shown him, **answered him, I am as thou art and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war,** he placed himself and all his resources at the service of Ahab. For the entire history cp. 1 Kings 22. V. 4. **And Jehoshaphat,** following the custom of consulting the Lord before declaring hostilities, **said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day.** V. 5. **Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets,** not those of Baal or Ashteroth,

but those of the official calf-worship, ostensibly to Jehovah, **four hundred men and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they,** as willing tools of Ahab, whose good will they wanted to retain, **said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand.** V. 6. **But Jehoshaphat said,** since he was dissatisfied with this procedure, **Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?** V. 7. **And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may enquire of the Lord, but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil; the same is Micaiah, the son of Imla.** The hatred of Ahab was due to the fact that this servant of the true God reproved his evil ways and threatened him with the punishment of God. Both an evil conscience and stubborn wickedness caused him to persecute Micaiah. **And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.** V. 8. **And the king of Israel called for one of his officers,** one on duty in the palace, **and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah, the son of Imla,** literally, "hurry him here." V. 9. **And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, sat either of them on his throne,** on fine seats placed for their convenience, **clothed in their robes; and they sat in a void place,** a great, open space, like a threshing-floor, **at the entering in of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them.** V. 10. **And Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, had made him horns of iron,** following the custom of true prophets, who often emphasized their words with symbolical actions, **and said, Thus saith the Lord, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed.** V. 11. **And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.** All this was done, of course, in order to win the favor of the king still more. V. 12. **And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good.** The messenger spoke with kindly intent, since he evidently wanted Micaiah to escape the king's wrath. V. 13. **And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak.** Nothing could induce him to deviate even the least bit from the way of duty which lay before him. V. 14. **And when he was come to the king,** to Ahab, whose subject he was, **the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And he said,** apparently in a mocking and sarcastic tone of voice, **Go ye up and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand.** V. 15. **And the king,** noting the irony of his words and manner, **said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord?** V. 16. **Then he,** thus solemnly urged to give a serious and truthful answer, **said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd; and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace.** That was the vision which the Spirit of prophecy had revealed to him, meaning that the army of Israel would be defeated and scattered, that Ahab would meet his death, and that the soldiers would return home without being pursued by the enemy. V. 17. **And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat,** for he ascribed this prophecy on the part of Micaiah to personal enmity, **Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil?** V. 18. **Again he,** Micaiah, **said,** in describing in full the scene which he had beheld in his vision, **Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting upon His throne,** as the great King of the universe, **and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left.** V. 19. **And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?** Note: The Lord does not influence men to do evil, but He makes use of their sinful acts occasionally in carrying out His designs. **And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner.** V. 20. **Then there came out a spirit,** as in the case of Job, Job 1, 6, **and stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith?** V. 21. **And he said, I will go out and be a lying spirit,** literally, "a spirit of deceit or lying falsehood," **in the mouth of all his,** Ahab's, **prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail, so that his advice would be accepted; go out and do even so,** this being understood, of course, in the nature of a permission and not of a command. V. 22. **Now, therefore, behold,** Micaiah makes the application to the case in hand, **the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord,** in this indirect manner, **hath spoken evil against thee.** V. 23. **Then Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, came near,** angry because he was thus exposed before the king, **and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?** It was a taunt provoked by jealousy: If you know so much, then tell me how all this happened, and how it is that you have a monopoly of the Spirit of inspiration. V. 24. **And Micaiah,** replying calmly, in spite of the insult offered him, **said, Be-**

hold, thou shalt see on that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself, fleeing from one chamber to the next in a futile effort to escape his pursuers. V. 25. **Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon, the governor of the city,** who also was in charge of the prison, **and to Joash, the king's son,** v. 26. **and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction,** the poorest prison-fare, **until I return in peace,** an expectation which he held with confidence. V. 27. **And Micaiah,** once more repeating his prophecy that the outcome of the war would be fatal to Ahab, **said, If thou certainly return in peace,** unharmed, as victor, **then hath not the Lord spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all ye people!** He wanted them all to be witnesses of these words. Note: People who, like Ahab, have sold themselves into the power of sin, are left by God in the service of Satan and punished with eternal damnation.

THE SYRIANS DEFEAT ISRAEL. — V. 28. **So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead,** in order to take it from the hands of the Syrians by force. V. 29. **And the king of Israel,** desiring to shield himself and thus to escape the fate predicted to him by Micaiah, **said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself,** by putting on the dress and the armor of an ordinary soldier or officer, **and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle.** V. 30. **Now, the king of Syria,** in order to put an early and satisfactory end to the war by removing Ahab at once, **had commanded the captains of the chariots that were with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel.** They were to single him out for their attacks, concentrate all their efforts upon him in order to slay him. V. 31. **And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat,** who was clothed in his royal attire, **that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight,** directing all their assaults against his person; **but Jehoshaphat cried out,** either in prayer or in making himself known, **and the Lord helped him; and God moved them to depart from him.** God saved the life of His servant. V. 32. **For it came to pass that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel,** when they became aware of their mistake, **they turned back again from pursuing him,** they no longer massed their attacks against his person. V. 33. **And a certain man drew a bow at a venture,** without taking specific aim at any one person in the army of Israel, **and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness,** there being small slits or openings where the several parts of the armor fitted together; **therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn thine hand that thou mayest carry me out of the host,** away from the battle-line; **for I am wounded,** he felt that he had received a mortal wound. V. 34. **And the battle increased that day; howbeit, the king of Israel stayed himself up in his chariot against the Syrians until the even,** holding himself upright by a strong effort of his will; **and about the time of the sun going down he died.** That was the end of Ahab, the enemy of the Lord. Like him, all the enemies of Jehovah will be destroyed, while He Himself holds His hand over those who trust in Him.

CHAPTER 19.

Further Measures of Reform.

JEHOSHAPHAT REPROVED BY THE SEER JEHU. V. 1. **And Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah,** after the unfortunate campaign against the Syrians, **returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.** Cp. chap. 18, 16. V. 2. **And Jehu, the son of Hanani, the seer, went out to meet him,** the same prophet who had been active in the northern kingdom under Baasha, 1 Kings 16, 1, and had probably been exiled for his fearless rebuke of idolatry, **and said to King Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly,** literally, "Is it to help the wicked," **and love them that hate the Lord?** Ahab was God's open enemy, 1 Kings 22, 2, and therefore Jehoshaphat's league with him was an unholy alliance. **Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord,** God was displeased with him to the point of anger and punishment. V. 3. **Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee,** which the Lord also freely acknowledged, **in that thou hast taken away the groves,** the wooden pillars sacred to the goddess Astarte, **out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God,** his personal character and life showed that he was still loyal to Jehovah. V. 4. **And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again through the people from Beersheba,** on the extreme southern boundary, **to Mount Ephraim,** where the northernmost cities under his jurisdiction were situated, **and brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers,** by reappointing the commissioners of religious instruction and thus renewing the people's knowledge of the Lord and of His holy Law. It is a most dangerous thing for

the children of God to make friends with ungodly, wicked people. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The damage done by such forbidden friendship is usually corrected only by a repentance which is zealous to return to the Lord and to perform His holy will.

Judges and Levites in Judah. — V. 5. **And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah,** cp. Deut. 16, 18—20, establishing local courts in every fortified city, after the manner of our county-seats with their court-houses, **city by city,** v. 6. **and said to the judges,** in reminding them of the instructions as given by the Lord, **Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord,** whose representatives they were in the work of their office, **who is with you in the judgment,** in the matter of passing judicial decisions, of pronouncing sentence. V. 7. **Wherefore, now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you,** keep them in the way of justice. **Take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord, our God,** He Himself is never guilty of injustice, **nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts,** to pervert the way of justice. These facts were intended to make the judges most carefully conscientious in all their work, in every decision, whether it concerned a very minor matter or a great and important sentence. It would be well and fortunate if judges everywhere would keep this ideal in mind and act accordingly. V. 8. **Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites and of the priests and of the chief of the fathers of Israel for the judgment of the Lord,** for the adjudication of very difficult matters, **and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem,** when a case was appealed from a lower court. These men constituted a supreme court of the Jews, and they had jurisdiction first over all matters pertaining to the religion of the land, and then also in all civil and criminal cases. V. 9. **And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord,** which should be the motive in all acts of the believers, **faithfully, and with a perfect heart,** one given to the Lord in undivided loyalty. V. 10. **And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities,** being appealed to this highest tribunal, **between blood and blood,** in cases involving murder and bloodshed, **between law and commandment, statutes and judgments,** in any dispute concerning the meaning or application of any precepts or instructions contained in the Book of the Law, **ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you and upon your brethren,** the entire people being held responsible for the transgressions of individuals if the matter were not righted in time. **This do, and ye shall not trespass.** V. 11. **And, behold, Amariah, the chief priest, is over you in all matters of the Lord,** he had the final decision in all religious questions; **and Zebadiah, the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters,** in all civil questions; **also the Levites shall be officers before you,** in the tasks assigned to them in the Temple, 1 Chron. 23, 4; 26, 29. **Deal courageously,** taking up the matter with all cheerful courage, as they had been bidden to do, **and the Lord shall be with the good,** with all the judges who would discharge the work of their office in accordance with His will. Mark: If a believer has blundered into error and sin, he should lose no time in returning to the Lord and in serving Him with all diligence. In that case the evil which he has committed will be forgotten.

CHAPTER 20.

The Victory of Jehoshaphat over the Heathen Nations.

The Threatened Invasion. — V. 1. **It came to pass after this also,** some six or seven years before the death of Jehoshaphat, **that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites,** namely, the Meunites of Arabia Petraea, all heathen nations east, southeast, and south of the Dead Sea, **came against Jehoshaphat to battle.** V. 2. **Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria,** rather, from Edom beyond the Dead Sea, for their attack would naturally be made from that side; **and, behold, they be in Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi,** at the middle of the western shore of the Dead Sea, some twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. V. 3. **And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord,** he sought no other avenues of help, but steadfastly looked to the Lord, **and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah,** as a sign of deep mourning and penitence over any misdeeds, in order to gain the good will of the Lord in their favor. V. 4. **And Judah gathered themselves together,** all the people of the country assembled at Jerusalem for a solemn, universal fast at the Sanctuary of Jehovah, **to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord,** for afflictions of every kind tend to drive men to the mercy of Jehovah. V. 5. **And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court,** the great or outer court, which had apparently

recently been repaired or enlarged, his position being at the entrance of the inner or priests' court, v. 6. **and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven,** the almighty Creator and Preserver, to whom the children of Israel owed all the rich benefits which they then enjoyed? **And rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen,** making it impossible for them to carry out any evil designs without His permission? **And in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee?** V. 7. **Art not Thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land,** all the heathen nations, **before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, Thy friend, forever?** Note the honor included in the word "friend," as applied to any believer. V. 8. **And they dwelt therein, and have built Thee a Sanctuary therein for Thy name, saying,** v. 9. **If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house and in Thy presence,** as King Solomon had prayed, 1 Kings 8, 33. 37, **(for Thy name is in this house,) and cry unto Thee in our affliction, then Thou wilt hear and help.** Jehoshaphat here made use of the proper importunity in his prayer, by reminding the Lord of His promise, chap. 7, 14—16. V. 10. **And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom Thou wouldest not let Israel invade,** for the Lord had expressly ordered that the children of Israel should not disturb these nations, Deut. 3, 4. 9. 19, **when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and destroyed them not;** v. 11. **behold, I say, how they reward us to come to cast us out of Thy possession which Thou hast given us to inherit.** The heathen nations were attacking without provocation, their purpose being the conquest of the land. V. 12. **O our God, wilt Thou not judge them?** namely, by letting His punitive justice strike them. **For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do,** they were unable to defend themselves against the overwhelming numbers; **but our eyes are upon Thee,** steadfastly and trustfully looking to God for His almighty assistance. V. 13. **And all Judah stood before the Lord,** in seconding the king's prayer, **with their little ones, their wives, and their children.** That is the proper and effective way of bringing matters to the attention of the Lord, by reminding Him of His promises and declaring one's unwavering trust in His almighty power and mercy alone.

THE MIRACULOUS OVERTHROW OF THE ENEMIES. — V. 14. **Then upon Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation,** putting a wonderful prophecy into his mouth; v. 15. **and he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou, King Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's;** it was He whose honor was at stake, and who would take steps to defend it. V. 16. **To-morrow go ye down against them; behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz,** the ascent of Haziz, the pass which led from the lowlands of the Dead Sea to the valley near Tekoa, southeast of Bethlehem; **and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the Wilderness of Jeruel,** for to that point this large, flat valley extends. V. 17. **Ye shall not need to fight in this battle,** it would be fought and won without their swords and bows; **set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem,** the deliverance which they would experience. **Fear not nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you.** V. 18. **And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground,** in grateful acknowledgment of the announcement made by God through His prophet; **and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshiping the Lord,** joining the king in his act of thanksgiving. V. 19. **And the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korhites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high,** in an anthem of praise flowing from the conviction of faith that the victory was even now gained. V. 20. **And they rose early in the morning and went forth into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said,** in an address delivered to the people at some convenient place, probably near the gate of the city from which they set forth, **Hear me, O Judah and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord, your God,** placing their trust in Him in unwavering faith, **so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.** V. 21. **And when he had consulted with the people,** advised them, exhorted them to confidence in God, **he appointed singers unto the Lord,** to lead the procession as it was led forth to the valley, **and that should praise the beauty of holiness,** the holy beauty and glory of Jehovah as the one true God and Savior, **as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever,** probably Ps. 136, which sets forth the great deeds of God. V. 22. **And when they began to sing and to praise,** in a singular service of worship based upon faith in the victory promised to them, **the Lord set ambushments against the chil-**

dren of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir which were come against Judah, and they were smitten. It seems that certain divisions of the invading hordes, eager for booty, had determined to waylay any forces that might come along. When these attacked their own confederates, however, the result was a wild self-slaughter of the invading army, every man regarding his neighbor as a traitor and an enemy. V. 23. **For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir,** the Meunites, **utterly to slay and destroy them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir,** when practically the entire force of the Meunites was annihilated, **every one helped to destroy another,** the wild slaughter continued, because they were all crazed with the lust of blood. V. 24. **And when Judah,** the procession which had left Jerusalem in the morning, **came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness,** on a rise of ground not far from Tekoa, where they could overlook the entire valley, **they looked unto the multitude,** they watched for the approaching hordes, **and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth and none escaped,** the entire hostile army was exterminated. V. 25. **And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies,** costly dress-goods and garments, **and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away,** an immense booty, for the nomadic tribes carried all their costly possessions with them. **And they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.** Thus the victory came to Jehoshaphat without the use of arms, as a gift of God's goodness, in return for the simple trust which he and the people had placed in Him alone. The same almighty God is the Refuge of His children to-day.

SUMMARY OF JEHOSHAPHAT'S REIGN. — V. 26. **And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the Valley of Berachah** (blessing, praise); **for there they blessed the Lord,** in this beautiful little valley west of Tekoa they expressed their gratitude to Jehovah in prayers of praise and thanksgiving; **therefore the name of the same place was called the Valley of Berachah unto this day.** V. 27. **Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem,** the entire procession which had left Jerusalem four days before, **and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them,** taking the lead in praising, as he had taken the lead in trusting the Lord's promise, **to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies,** and their gladness was expressed in the proper manner, in thanksgiving to Jehovah, who gave the victory. V. 28. **And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets,** the usual instruments used for the Temple music, **unto the house of the Lord.** V. 29. **And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries,** they were deterred from undertaking hostilities by their dread of the God of Israel, **when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.** V. 30. **So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about.** Peace in the land is ever a gift of God's bountiful goodness. V. 31. **And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah,** over the southern kingdom only; **he was thirty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.** V. 32. **And he walked in the way of Asa, his father,** in the fear of Jehovah, **and departed not from it,** being even more consistently faithful to Jehovah than his father, **doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord.** V. 33. **Howbeit, the high places were not taken away,** the altars erected on the hills contrary to the will of God, whether expressly dedicated to idolatry or not; **for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.** V. 34. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of Jehu, the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the Book of the Kings of Israel,** 1 Kings 16, 1. 7. V. 35. **And after this did Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel,** as he had made a league with his father before him, **who did very wickedly.** V. 36. **And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish,** most likely Tartessus in Spain, after Ahaziah had overcome the reluctance of Jehoshaphat, 1 Kings 22, 49; **and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber,** the harbor at the head of the Elanitic Gulf. V. 37. **Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken,** wrecked before they left the harbor, **that they were not able to go to Tarshish.** God has ways and means to keep men from yielding too much to pride and arrogance and thus losing their trust in Him.

CHAPTER 21.

The Reign of Jehoram.

THE WICKEDNESS OF JEHORAM. — V. 1. **Now, Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the City of David,** in the tombs of the kings. **And Jehoram, his son,** son-in-law of the wicked Ahab of Israel, **reigned in his stead.** He may have been coregent with his father for a while before this. V. 2. **And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah** (Hebrew, Azariahu), **and Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel,** the word in this instance being the designation of the southern kingdom. V. 3. **And their father gave them,** had given them before he died, **great gifts of silver and of gold and of precious things with fenced cities in Judah,** thus assuring to each one an independent income and at least a subordinate position in the kingdom as commandants of fortified cities; **but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born,** he was designated as the crown prince of the realm and the successor of Jehoshaphat, and this decision was accepted without opposition by the other princes. V. 4. **Now, when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself,** he summoned all his energy, **and slew all his brethren with the sword and divers also of the princes of Israel,** such as he suspected of a loyal interest in the princes and liable to avenge their death. It was an unwarranted act of tyrannical cruelty, a tragedy showing the wickedness of Jehoram. V. 5. **Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.** V. 6. **And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,** in all their idolatry and unexampled wickedness, **like as did the house of Ahab,** whose evil spirit was Jezebel, the wife of Ahab; **for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife; and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord,** thus completely obliterating the effect of the splendid example of his father, since he encouraged the introduction of every idolatrous custom connected with the worship of the heathen deities. V. 7. **Howbeit, the Lord would not destroy the house of David,** richly as Jehoram's behavior merited such a fate, **because of the covenant that He had made with David,** 2 Sam. 7, **and as He promised to give a light to him and to his sons forever,** to keep the descendants of David on the throne of Judah and thus to keep his family alive. V. 8. **In his days the Edomites,** who had been overthrown by David, 2 Sam. 8, 14, **revolted from under the dominion of Judah and made themselves a king,** once more proclaiming themselves an independent state. V. 9. **Then Jehoram went forth with his princes,** the generals of his army, **and all his chariots with him,** the strongest division of his army; **and he rose up by night,** when he found himself surrounded by the enemy's forces, **and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots,** thereby succeeding merely in effecting his escape, while his army promptly fled to the security of their homes. V. 10. **So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day,** the time when the original account was written from which the inspired writer drew, for the victory of Amaziah over the Edomites, chap. 25, 14—16, seems to have had no lasting effects. **The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand,** this being a city with its surrounding territory on the southwestern border, both Philistines and Phenicians aiding them in their rebellion, **because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers.** V. 11. **Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah,** altars on the summits of the mountains dedicated to idolatry, **and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication,** spiritual adultery in rejecting Jehovah and in serving false gods, **and compelled Judah thereto.** The history of Jehoram shows how quickly wicked rulers can undo the reform work of many years. Unbelief, idolatry, false doctrine, is accepted much more readily than the true worship of God.

THE LORD'S PUNISHMENT UPON JEHORAM. — V. 12. **And there came a writing to him,** Jehoram, **from Elijah, the prophet,** a prophetic letter evidently written or dictated by Elijah before his death, which seems to have taken place during the reign of Jehoshaphat, 2 Kings 2, **saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David, thy father,** to whom alone the continuation of the dynasty was to be ascribed, **Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat, thy father, nor in the ways of Asa, king of Judah,** v. 13. **but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel,** in all their idolatrous wickedness, **and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a-whoring,** in spiritual adultery, to forsake Jehovah and become guilty of the idolatry of the heathen nations, and practise the immoral customs connected with their religion, **like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab,** the extreme example of wickedness in this respect, **and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house,** in cold-blooded, cruel murder, **which were better than thyself,** not so steeped in idolatry, v. 14. **behold, with a great plague,** a severe scourge, **will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods,** namely, by devastating invasions; v. 15. **and thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day,** dur-

ing many days, for a long time. It was a singular and horrible disease, that of rotting away of the intestines in a slow disintegration. V. 16. **Moreover, the Lord,** in fulfilling this prophecy, **stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines,** who had been held in check for a long time, **and of the Arabians that were near the Ethiopians,** those of Southern Arabia. V. 17. **And they came up into Judah and brake into it,** they forced their way into the country in spite of all attempted opposition, **and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house,** plundering even the royal palace and the royal domains, **and his sons also and his wives,** the members of his harem, **so that there was never a son left him save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons,** also called Ahaziah and Azariah. V. 18. **And after all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease,** apparently some form of extreme dysentery. V. 19. **And it came to pass that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness,** the very intestines having been eaten away by the horrible malady; **so he died of sore diseases,** suffering severe pains. **And his people made no burning for him like the burning of his fathers;** see chap. 16, 14, where we read that sweet spices were burned in memory of the dead. V. 20. **Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired;** no one regretted his death, it was a relief for the entire kingdom. **Howbeit, they buried him in the City of David, but not in the sepulchers of the kings,** he was denied even this last honor. Like Jehoram, all wicked, idolatrous people are bound for destruction. God visits them with His displeasure even here in time, and eventually, in eternity, they will have to bear the punishment of their transgressions forever.

CHAPTER 22.

The Reign of Ahaziah.

V. 1. **And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his** (Joram's) **youngest son,** who probably assumed this name upon his accession to the throne, **king in his stead,** this being expressly mentioned because he was not the crown prince; **for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp,** the band consisting of Arabians which had plundered the royal domain, **had slain all the eldest,** thus leaving this son as the only legitimate heir of Jehoram. **So Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned,** he was proclaimed and accepted as king of the southern kingdom. V. 2. **Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign,** that is, it was the forty-second year of the kingdom of his mother's family and the twenty-second of his life, **and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri,** a daughter of the house of Ahab and therefore expert in every idolatrous wickedness. V. 3. **He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly,** she brought about a further corruption of religion and morals. V. 4. **Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab,** again named as an extreme example of ungodliness; **for they,** his relatives on his mother's side, **were his counselors after the death of his father to his destruction.** V. 5. **He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel,** in another alliance which displeased the Lord, **to war against Hazael, king of Syria, at Ramoth-gilead,** in a second effort to recapture this city from the Syrians; **and the Syrians smote Joram,** 2 Kings 8, 28. 29. V. 6. **And he returned to be healed in Jezreel,** his summer residence, **because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael, king of Syria. And Azariah** (or Ahaziah), **the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram, the son of Ahab, at Jezreel, because he was sick,** this visit probably taking place after his return to Jerusalem, after the unfortunate expedition in which he participated. V. 7. **And the destruction of Ahaziah,** literally, "his down-treading," his downfall, **was of God by coming to Joram,** God made use of this move in bringing about his destruction; **for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu, the son of Nimshi,** that is, to meet Jehu, who was the grandson of Nimshi, **whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab,** 2 Kings 9, 6. 7. V. 8. **And it came to pass that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab,** in slaying all the kinsfolks of Ahab, 2 Kings 10, 10. 11, **and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah that ministered to Ahaziah,** all of whom had accompanied the king of Judah down to Jezreel, **he slew them.** V. 9. **And he sought Ahaziah; and they caught him** (for he was hid in Samaria) **and brought him to Jehu.** This account is easily reconciled with that of 2 Kings 9, 27—29. "Ahaziah fled first to the garden-house and escaped to Samaria, but was there, where he had hid himself, taken by Jehu's men, who had pursued him, brought to Jehu, who was still in or near Jezreel, and at his command slain at the hill

Gur, beside Ibleam, in his chariot; that is, mortally wounded with an arrow, so that he, again fleeing, expired at Megiddo." (Keil.) **And when they had slain him, they buried him,** giving him the honor of a decent burial, **because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom,** all the other princes having been slain by Jehu, and Ahaziah's children being yet too young to become rulers of the people. V. 10. **But when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah,** all the infant children of her son whom she could locate. V. 11. **But Jehoshabeath** (or Jehosheba), **the daughter of the king,** probably a daughter of Jehoram by another wife than Athaliah, **took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bed-chamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada, the priest,** (for she was the sister, or more exactly, the half-sister, **of Ahaziah,**) **hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not.** V. 12. **And he was with them hid in the house of God six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land,** as queen or dowager-regent, although a usurper at the same time. In this way the Lord laid affliction upon His people in order to knit their hearts more closely to Him once more; for that is ever the purpose of His visitations upon His children.

CHAPTER 23.

The Accession of Joash.

JOASH MADE KING. — V. 1. **And in the seventh year,** namely, after Athaliah had usurped the power in Judah, **Jehoiada strengthened himself,** was filled with courage and energy, **and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah, the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael, the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah, the son of Obed, and Maaseiah, the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat, the son of Zichri, into covenant with him,** these commanders of the guard being exceptionally trustworthy men. Cp. 2 Kings 11, 4. V. 2. **And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.** So the centurions of the guard were reenforced by the Levites and by the tribe-chiefs, the heads of the father-houses. All these were pledged to support the plan of Jehoiada, as it was put in operation in the Temple on a certain day. V. 3. **And all the congregation,** whose cooperation had been secured by the wise plan of Jehoiada, **made a covenant with the king in the house of God,** pledging him their support, in overthrowing Athaliah's tyranny and in upholding the rightful heir to the throne. **And he,** Jehoiada, **said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David,** 2 Sam. 7, 12. V. 4. **This is the thing that ye shall do: A third part of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors,** guarding the thresholds. It should be remembered that a certain part of the Levites retired from service every Sabbath, while an equal number resumed their ministry on that day. On this occasion they were apparently placed under the command of the centurions of the guards to insure proper military order, in case necessity should arise. V. 5. **And a third part shall be at the king's house,** posted near the royal palace, able to guard the entire passageway between palace and Temple; **and a third part at the gate of the foundation,** at the gate Jesod or Sur, 2 Kings 11, 6; **and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord,** it being an easy matter to have such an assembly at one of the great annual festivals, when the number of visitors in Jerusalem was very great. V. 6. **But let none come into the house of the Lord,** the inner Temple, the Sanctuary proper with its court, **save the priests and they that minister of the Levites,** namely, in assisting in the offering of sacrifices; **they shall go in, for they are holy,** set apart especially for this duty; **but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord,** behaving in a manner which would be in full accordance with all the precepts of the Lord. V. 7. **And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand,** furnished from the armory of David on the Temple grounds; **and whosoever else cometh into the house,** without being authorized to enter the inner Temple grounds, **he shall be put to death; but be ye with the king when he cometh in and when he goeth out,** to guard his life at all times. V. 8. **So the Levites and all Judah,** under the command of the centurions of the guard, **did according to all things that Jehoiada, the priest, had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the Sabbath,** for their regular term of duty, **with them that were to go out on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada, the priest, dismissed not the courses,** he, upon this occasion, detained those who would ordinarily have been excused, because he needed as large a force as he could possibly gather. V. 9. **Moreover, Jehoiada, the priest, delivered to the captains of hundreds spears and bucklers and shields**

that had been King David's, which were in the house of God, for captured arms were deposited as trophies in the house of God, 1 Chron. 18, 7 ff.; 2 Chron. 9, 24; 12, 10. V. 10. **And he set all the people,** those selected for this special work, **every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the Temple to the left side of the Temple,** all the way across its entire area, **along by the altar and the Temple,** both the altar of burnt offering and the Sanctuary itself being included in this ring of defenders, **by the king round about,** who was placed inside this cordon. V. 11. **Then they brought out the king's son,** from his place of concealment somewhere in the Temple chambers, **and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony,** either a copy of the entire Law, or of that part which related to the duties of a king, Deut. 17, 18, **and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him and said, God save the king!** literally, "May the king live!" an acclamation of loyalty. After days of darkness and affliction the Lord often sends days of special joy and blessing upon His people.

Athaliah Slain. — V. 12. **Now, when Athaliah,** from her palace on the other side of the valley, **heard the noise of the people running and praising the king,** for the joyful shouts of the people and the loud blasts of the Temple trumpets indicated an unusual occurrence on the Temple grounds, **she came to the people,** having rushed across the magnificent bridge of Solomon to the Temple grounds, **into the house of the Lord;** v. 13. **and she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar, at the entering in,** apparently some sort of a platform near the entrance to the Temple proper, **and the princes and the trumpets by the king. And all the people of the land rejoiced and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of music,** rendering some of the Temple music in honor of Jehovah, **and such as taught to sing praise,** with the psalms used on festival occasions. **Then Athaliah rent her clothes,** in grief and anger, signifying her deep disgust, **and said, Treason, treason!** This call was a last desperate attempt to stop the proceedings, as if they were unlawful. V. 14. **Then Jehoiada, the priest, brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the hosts,** those in charge of the guard and the Levites upon this occasion, **and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges,** out of the Temple grounds, in such a way that she was led out between ranks of soldiers and had no chance to communicate with any followers; **and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the Lord,** where her blood would desecrate the Sanctuary. V. 15. **So they laid hands on her,** they arrested her; **and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house,** the entrance where the horses were led into the complex of buildings which formed the royal palace, near the royal stables, **they slew her there.** Thus the Lord's punishment was visited upon her for her idolatry and for her murders. The vengeance of the Lord is sometimes slow in coming, but it always finds the transgressors some time.

The Right Worship Restored. — V. 16. **And Jehoiada,** who represented Jehovah at this assembly, 2 Kings 11, 17, **made a covenant between him and between all the people and between the king,** all of them joining in a solemn covenant of loyalty, **that they should be the Lord's people.** V. 17. **Then all the people went to the house of Baal,** a temple of idolatry erected under the direction of Athaliah somewhere in that neighborhood, **and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan, the priest of Baal, before the altars,** thus putting an end to idolatry in Jerusalem. V. 18. **Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord,** all the various orders of assistants and ministers on duty in the Temple and its grounds, **by the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord,** assigning both their special tasks and the order of their serving by lot, 1 Chron. 23 to 25, **to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the Law of Moses,** Num. 28, 2, **with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David,** for the orders of singers were especially designated. V. 19. **And he set the porters,** in special divisions guarding the various entrances, **at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in anything should enter in,** for the contact of Levitically unclean persons defiled the Sanctuary, Lev. 5, 2. 3. V. 20. **And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people,** all those occupying positions of influence and authority in ruling the people, **and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the Lord. And they came through the high gate,** probably the gate of the Temple which led to the royal palace, **into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom,** the great ivory throne of Solomon. V. 21. **And all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword,** any followers whom she might still have had in the city thought it best to hold their peace and not to attempt any hostile demonstration. Thus the Lord had put an end to the persecution of the tyrant and restored the true worship in Jerusalem. The usual result of persecution has ever been to cause the Church to be filled with new zeal for God and for His Word.

CHAPTER 24.

Chief Events of the Reign of Joash.

THE GOOD RULE OF JOASH DURING JEHOIADA'S LIFE. — V. 1. **Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, having been a mere infant when his aunt saved his life, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Zibiah of Beersheba.** V. 2. **And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada, the priest.** A single man who, like this venerable priest, adheres firmly to the Word of the Lord may be a very strong moral support for the whole Church. V. 3. **And Jehoiada, when the young king had reached the proper age, took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.** V. 4. **And it came to pass after this that Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord,** to renew and replace all those parts and sections which showed signs of decay, or which had been ruined by the idolaters. V. 5. **And he gathered together the priests and the Levites and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel, of all those who belonged to the true Israel, who still professed their belief in Jehovah, money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter.** Things were in such a condition that haste was required. **Howbeit, the Levites hastened it not,** the collecting of the Temple tax was not a task that appealed to them. V. 6. **And the king called for Jehoiada, the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, the tax, or assessment, according to the commandment of Moses, the servant of the Lord, Ex. 30, 12—16, and of the congregation of Israel, for the Tabernacle of Witness?** for it was for this tent and its service that the assessment had originally been levied. V. 7. **For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, the notorious idolater, the worshiper of Baal and Astarte, had broken up the house of God,** doing considerable damage in parts of the buildings; **and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim,** profaning the gold and silver vessels consecrated to Jehovah by using them for their idolatrous worship. V. 8. **And at the king's commandment they, the Levites, made a chest and set it without at the gate of the house of the Lord,** evidently at the entrance to the Court of the Priests, where it was accessible to all members of the Jewish Church. V. 9. **And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness,** the half-shekel Sanctuary money which all adults were required to pay every year. V. 10. **And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest until they had made an end,** either until all members of the nation had paid, or until the chest was full to the top. V. 11. **Now it came to pass that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe, his secretary, and the high priest's officer,** his personal representative, **came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day,** every day that it was necessary, whenever the chest was full, **and gathered money in abundance.** V. 12. **And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the Lord,** those in charge of the repair work in the Temple, **and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the Lord, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the Lord,** wherever the metal work required renewing. V. 13. **So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them,** literally, "and there was completed the healing," that is, they finished all the repairs; **and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.** V. 14. **And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the Lord,** such as were used in the Temple worship, **even vessels to minister and to offer withal,** altar vessels, **and spoons,** cuplike vessels for incense, **and vessels of gold and silver,** as it became necessary to replace the old and worn-out ones. **And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the Lord continually all the days of Jehoiada,** under his direction the entire worship was conducted in the legal manner, as prescribed by the Lord. It is well-pleasing to God if believers serve Him with their gifts and sacrifices, with their money and possessions, if they aid in the spreading of the Word. At the same time the teachers of the Church ought to lead the way and admonish the members of the Church, in order that the sacred work may not suffer for want of interest.

THE DEFECTION OF JOASH AND ITS PUNISHMENT. — V. 15. **But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died,** he lived to reach an unusually great age; **an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died.** V. 16. **And they buried him in the City of David among the kings,** giving him one of the highest honors which could be bestowed upon any man in Judah, **because he had done good in Israel, both toward God**

and toward His house. This was, as in many similar cases, followed by a strange reaction in the land. V. 17. **Now, after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah and made obeisance to the king.** As long as the old priest had lived, they had not dared to show their preference for the idolatrous customs of the heathen, but they thought the time had now come to assert themselves and to gain control of the king. **Then the king hearkened unto them,** permitting himself to be swayed by their wicked whisperings. This incident shows how deeply the nation had been corrupted at the time of Jehoiada's reformation, how firmly even the leaders had been attached to idolatry. V. 18. **And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers and served groves,** Asherim, the wooden pillars erected in honor of Astarte, **and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass,** for this is the inevitable consequence of the desertion of the true God and the turning to idolatry in any form. V. 19. **Yet He,** the Lord, **sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord; and they testified against them,** with warnings which pointed out the certain consequences of such behavior; **but they would not give ear,** they were too deeply steeped in their sins and too stubborn to heed the words which were intended to bring them back to the right pathway. V. 20. **And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada,** that is, the grandson, for his father's name was Barachias, **the priest, which stood above the people,** for the inner court, where he stood, was higher than the outer court, where the people were assembled, **and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the Lord, He hath also forsaken you.** Forsaking the Lord invariably brought misfortune, as the people should have known without this inspired warning. V. 21. **And they,** the people, **conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord.** This shows how quickly and how deeply Joash had fallen from the right way after the death of Jehoiada. The incident is referred to by Christ in one of His warnings to the Jews of His time, Matt. 23, 35; Luke 11, 51. V. 22. **Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada, his father, had done to him,** in being his steadfast and reliable counselor for so many years, **but slew his son.** Ingratitude is the mark of the godless. **And when he, Zechariah, died, he said, The Lord look upon it and require it,** he left the vengeance, the punishment of this crime, to Jehovah. V. 23. **And it came to pass at the end of the year,** at the season when campaigns were usually opened, **that the host of Syria came up against him,** the Lord's withdrawing the blessing of peace from His people being direct evidence that He had forsaken them. **And they came to Judah and Jerusalem,** under the leadership of their King Hazael, **and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people,** probably including the very ones who had reintroduced idolatry, **and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.** V. 24. **For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men,** just as Moses had predicted would happen, Lev. 26, 8; Deut. 32, 30, **and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. So they,** the soldiers of the enemy, **executed judgment against Joash,** the Lord made use of them in carrying out His sentence of punishment upon the backsliding nation. V. 25. **And when they were departed from him,** (**for they left him in great diseases,** with many wounds, which resulted in a painful malady,) **his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada, the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died,** for public opinion ascribed these great disasters to the king. **And they buried him in the City of David; but they buried him not in the sepulchers of the kings,** he was not given that distinction, but was treated with dishonor, like Jehoram, chap. 21, 20. V. 26. **And these are they that conspired against him: Zabad** (or Jozachar), **the son of Shimeath, an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad, the son of Shimrith** (or Shomer), **a Moabitess,** neither of them members of the Jewish nation. V. 27. **Now, concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him,** the treasure which he had to send as a tribute to Hazael of Syria, **and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they are written in the story of the Book of the Kings. And Amaziah, his son, reigned in his stead,** 2 Kings 12, 21. The history of Joash contains an earnest warning to all those who at one time were zealous for the Lord, but later turned to the opposite extreme. If one deliberately turns to the service of sin, all the efforts of an earlier blameless life will be of no avail.

CHAPTER 25.

The Reign of Amaziah.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE EDOMITES. — V. 1. **Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem,** one of the wives selected for his father by Jehoiada, the priest. V. 2. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,** in maintaining the worship of Jehovah, **but not with a perfect heart,** with undivided loyalty; not only did he tolerate idolatry, but he even encouraged its practise. V. 3. **Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him,** when he was universally acknowledged and accepted as king, **that he slew his servants that had killed the king, his father,** chap. 24, 25. V. 4. **But he slew not their children,** literally, "and their sons not put he to death," **but did as it is written in the Law, in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin,** Deut. 24, 16. V. 5. **Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah together,** mustering its strength for service in war, **and made them captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers,** by the divisions of the tribe known as father-houses, **throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men,** veteran soldiers, a much smaller number than at the time of Jehoshaphat; some eighty years before, **able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield.** V. 6. **He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valor out of Israel,** the northern kingdom, **for an hundred talents of silver** (about two hundred thousand dollars). The smallness of Judah's army drove the king to this unusual act of hiring mercenaries to bring up his forces to what he considered fighting strength. V. 7. **But there came a man of God,** one of the prophets, **to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim,** this section of the northern kingdom being the headquarters of the idolatry practised since the days of Jeroboam and Ahab. V. 8. **But if thou wilt go, if he would make up his mind to enter upon the campaign alone, do it, be strong for the battle; God shall make thee fall before the enemy,** namely, if he persisted in his determination to keep the mercenaries of Ephraim; **for God hath power to help and to cast down.** It was both a promise and a warning. V. 9. **And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?** The troop, the body of mercenaries, had been paid, and the prudence of the king would naturally ask such a question. **And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this,** for in His hand is all the wealth of the world. V. 10. **Then Amaziah separated them, to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again,** discharged without having seen duty in the proposed campaign; **wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger,** literally, "in the glow or heat of their anger," chiefly, perhaps, because the hope of booty was withdrawn from them and the sum which they received as mercenaries alone was not sufficient in their estimation. V. 11. **And Amaziah strengthened himself,** he was filled with courage and energy, **and led forth his people, and went to the Valley of Salt,** southeast of the Dead Sea, **and smote of the children of Seir,** of the Edomites, **ten thousand.** V. 12. **And other ten thousand left alive,** after being captured, **did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock,** a well-known hill or rocky point, probably that on which the capital of Idumaea was situated, **and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces,** a common mode of execution among ancient nations. V. 13. **But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle,** the members of the host from Ephraim, **fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon,** all along the northern boundary, **and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.** In this way they took their revenge for the supposed insult heaped upon them. The victory of Amaziah shows that the fear of the Lord is a power in overcoming all enemies, in granting victory and blessing.

AMAZIAH'S IDOLATRY AND DEFEAT BY ISRAEL. V. 14. **Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites,** which, however, gave him no lasting advantages, chap. 21, 10, **that he brought the gods of the children of Seir,** the idols of the conquered army, to which he had taken a liking for some reason, **and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them,** for they were, at least in part, images of the sun, and the burning of incense was one of the principal acts of worship in their honor. V. 15. **Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and He sent unto him a prophet,** perhaps the very man whose counsel the king had formerly heeded, **which**

said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? The very foolishness of his action should have struck Amaziah. V. 16. **And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel?** literally, "Have we made thee counselor to the king?" He who would at another time have welcomed the advice of Jehovah's servant was now so puffed up by his recent success that he resented every form of interference. **Forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten?** He was so far gone in his blindness that he threatened to harm the prophet of Jehovah if he persisted in his advice. **Then the prophet forbare, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee because thou hast done this and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.** Since Amaziah wilfully hardened his heart and blinded his eyes, therefore the Lord would use this state of mind for his own destruction, punishing him with his own sins. V. 17. **Then Amaziah, king of Judah, took advice,** he accepted counsel from another quarter, **and sent to Joaz, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face,** a challenge to measure the strength of their respective armies in battle. V. 18. **And Joash, king of Israel, sent to Amaziah, king of Judah, saying, The thistle,** a low, shrubby thornbush, **that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife,** an unheard-of assumption; **and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon and trode down the thistle,** trampled it under foot for the worthless and insignificant weed that it was. The meaning of the parable is clear. The thorn-bush represented Amaziah, a petty prince, the cedar, the powerful sovereign of Israel, and the wild beast that trampled under foot the thistle, the overwhelming army with which Israel would subdue and exterminate Judah. V. 19. **Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast. Abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to thine hurt,** deliberately inviting disaster by this unprovoked attack upon Israel, **that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?** V. 20. **But Amaziah would not hear,** since he was in a state of deliberate blindness; **for it came of God, that He might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom.** V. 21. **So Joash, the king of Israel, went up,** he determined upon a surprise attack before Amaziah had completed his military preparations; **and they saw one another in the face,** they measured their strength in battle, **both he and Amaziah, king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah,** on the southern border of Dan, northwest of Jerusalem. V. 22. **And Judah was put to the worse before Israel,** utterly routed in battle, **and they fled every man to his tent.** V. 23. **And Joash, the king of Israel, took Amaziah, king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem,** a captive in his own capital, **and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits,** to signify that he could at any time march into the city. V. 24. **And he took all the gold and the silver and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom,** who had charge of these treasures, **and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also,** which would insure him against a repetition of the attacks on the part of Amaziah, **and returned to Samaria.** V. 25. **And Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived after the death of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, fifteen years.** V. 26. **Now, the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel?** Cp. 2 Kings 14. V. 27. **Now, after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord,** when he abandoned himself to idolatry, **they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish,** on the border of Philistia; **but they sent to Lachish after him and slew him there.** V. 28. **And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah,** that is, in the City of David, 2 Kings 14, 20. Conspiracy and rebellion are scourges with which God has punished many a proud tyrant.

CHAPTER 26.

The Reign of Uzziah.

THE SUCCESS OF UZZIAH. — V. 1. **Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah** (or Azariah), **who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.** V. 2. **He built Eloth,** the port on the Red Sea from which Hebrew merchants maintained trade relations with the East, **and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.** V. 3. **Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.** V. 4. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,** walking in the fear of Jehovah and maintaining the right worship, according to **all that his father Amaziah did,** before he

gave way to idolatry. V. 5. **And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God,** he was a prophetic teacher and a counselor of King Uzziah; **and as long as he, the king, sought the Lord, God made him to prosper,** gave success to his undertakings. V. 6. **And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod,** three of their most important cities, the leading cities of three city-states, **and built cities about Ashdod,** in the country tributary to this city, **and among the Philistines,** the latter thus being practically in total subjection to Judah. V. 7. **And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal,** apparently nomadic tribes toward the southwest, **and the Mehunims,** the Meunites, affiliated with the Edomites. V. 8. **And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah,** becoming tributary to him; **and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt,** both his fame and his authority extended over all the tribes inhabiting this entire country; **for he strengthened himself exceedingly.** V. 9. **Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate and at the valley gate and at the turning of the wall,** at the points where defense was most urgently needed, where missiles could be hurled most successfully against an approaching enemy, **and fortified them.** V. 10. **Also he built towers in the desert,** for observation, defense, and shelter, **and digged many wells,** prepared cisterns to hold the water collected during the rainy season; **for he had much cattle, both in the low country,** between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean Sea, **and in the plains,** the great prairies east of Jordan and probably also south of the Wilderness of Judah, where good grazing was found; **husbandmen also and vine-dressers in the mountains,** where the best vineyards were situated, **and in Carmel,** the section of that name in the south of Judah; **for he loved husbandry,** he was greatly interested in farming. V. 11. **Moreover, Uzziah had an host of fighting men that went out to war by bands,** in small troops, or regiments, which served in rotation, **according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel, the scribe, and Maaseiah, the ruler,** these men being the mustering officers in a subordinate position, **under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains,** the superintendent of the military muster-rolls. V. 12. **The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valor,** the chiefs of the father-houses, who were captains of the bands of the father-houses, **were two thousand and six hundred.** V. 13. **And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power,** trained to make use of powerful courage in battle and of the efficiency gained through training, **to help the king against the enemy.** V. 14. **And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons,** coats of mail, **and bows, and slings to cast stones,** a skill in which the Benjamites had always been proficient. V. 15. **And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal,** the first machines for throwing projectiles mentioned in history. **And his name spread far abroad, and his power and authority at the same rate; for he was marvelously helped till he was strong.** He conducted himself in everything as the representative of the Lord and was blessed by God accordingly. Before the Lord sends His judgments upon men, He often tries to have His goodness lead them to repentance.

UZZIAH'S ARROGANCE PUNISHED.—V. 16. **But when he was strong,** when he had gained so much power and occupied such an influential position among the nations, **his heart was lifted up,** in sinful pride and vanity, **to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord, his God, and went into the Temple of the Lord,** into the Holy Place, **to burn incense upon the altar of incense,** this being the privilege of the priests alone, Ex. 30, 7. 27; Num. 18, 1—7. V. 17. **And Azariah, the priest,** that is, the head-priest, the high priest, **went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord that were valiant men,** men in the vigor of their strength; v. 18. **and they withstood Uzziah the king,** strongly remonstrated with him for his blasphemous intention, **and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense,** the daily burning of incense at the morning and evening sacrifice being an important part of their duty. **Go out of the Sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God,** an emphatic way of saying that he had loaded dishonor, shame, and resentment from the Lord upon himself. V. 19. **Then Uzziah was wroth,** as a wilful sinner is apt to be if confronted and called to order, **and had a censer in his hand to burn incense,** all ready to usurp the rights of the priests; **and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord from beside the incense altar.** It was a sudden punishment of the Lord, such as that which had come upon Miriam, Num. 12. 10, an emphatic way of correcting the presumption of the king. V. 20.

And Azariah, the chief priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, the mark was unmistakable. And they thrust him out from thence, lest his uncleanness defile the Sanctuary; yea, himself, filled with terror at this turn of events, hasted also to go out because the Lord had smitten him, a fact which was obvious to him as it was to the priests. V. 21. **And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death and dwelt in a several house,** literally, "a house of separation," a hospital or infirmary, **being a leper,** to whom all direct intercourse with other people was prohibited; **for he was cut off from the house of the Lord,** he was not permitted to enter the Temple again. **And Jotham, his son, was over the king's house, judging the people of the land,** as coregent with his father. V. 22. **Now, the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz, write,** for he was prophet in Judah at this time, Is. 1, 1. V. 23. **So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings,** in the plot of ground adjoining the tombs, but not inside the royal sepulchers; **for they said, He is a leper. And Jotham, his son, reigned in his stead.** Azariah and the other priests offer a fine example to the ministers of the New Testament. The latter also should guard the rights of the sanctuary and not permit the State to usurp the rights of the Church. History reports more than one instance in which members of the government and entire governments were punished for interfering with the work of the Church.

CHAPTER 27.

The Reign of Jotham.

V. 1. **Jotham was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.** Cp. 2 Kings 15, 32—35. **His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok,** probably a descendant of the famous priest of that name. V. 2. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did,** all but the burning of incense in the Temple; **howbeit, he entered not into the Temple of the Lord,** that is, the Sanctuary proper. **And the people did yet corruptly,** idolatry was still being carried on in the high places, for Jotham seems to have lacked real energy; his reign was pretty colorless. V. 3. **He built the high gate of the house of the Lord,** that is, he repaired this gate on the upper side of the Temple area, **and on the wall of Ophel,** on the southern slope of the Temple mountain, **he built much.** V. 4. **Moreover, he built cities in the mountains of Judah; and in the forests,** in the wooded and rugged places, where fortified cities could not well be erected, **he built castles and towers,** forts which would serve for purposes of defense. V. 5. **He fought also with the king of the Ammonites,** who probably had attempted to revolt after paying tribute to Uzziah, and **prevailed against them,** they were unable to regain their independence. **And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver and ten thousand measures of wheat** (a measure, at that time, being almost six bushels) **and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year and the third,** as the regular annual tribute. V. 6. **So Jotham became mighty,** he held a position of some influence and authority among the surrounding nations, **because he prepared his ways before the Lord, his God,** he was established in his personal piety. It was only a little later, when the Syrians and Israel combined to attack the kingdom of Judah, that the Ammonites succeeded in regaining their independence, 2 Kings 15, 37. V. 7. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways,** his entire manner of conducting his life, **lo, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.** V. 8. **He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.** V. 9. **And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David,** with all the other kings of the dynasty of David; **and Ahaz, his son, reigned in his stead.** Even a ruler's piety cannot keep the punishment of God from an idolatrous people if they persist in their wickedness.

CHAPTER 28.

The Reign of Ahaz.

AHAZ DEFEATED BY THE SYRIANS AND BY ISRAEL. — V. 1. **Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; but he did not that which was right,** in accordance with the Law of God, **in the sight of the Lord, like David, his father.** In spite of the fact that he had the great prophet Isaiah in his kingdom, he was given to idolatry and to other forms of wickedness, all of which he refused to forsake. V. 2. **For he walked in**

the ways of the kings of Israel, whose defection from the worship of Jehovah was notorious, **and made also molten images for Baalim,** the idols of the heathen Canaanites. V. 3. **Moreover, he burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom,** southwest of Jerusalem, the Valley Ben-hinnom, **and burned his children in the fire,** sacrificing them to Moloch, the idol of the Moabites, **after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.** This was not only base ingratitude, but was equivalent to a challenge to the Lord. V. 4. **He sacrificed also and burned incense in the high places and on the hills and under every green tree,** deliberately indulging in every abomination which the Lord had so emphatically forbidden time and again. V. 5. **Wherefore the Lord, his God,** still his God and ready to accept him if he would but turn to Him in true repentance, **delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria,** who had shown a hostile attitude even in the days of Jotham; **and they,** the Syrians, **smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus.** That was the result of the first part of the campaign, briefly summarized. **And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter,** by defeating his army and cutting them down with the usual bitterness existing between related nations in case of war. V. 6. **For Pekah, the son of Remaliah, slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day,** in a slaughter which was a terrible calamity, **which were all valiant men,** the flower of the nation, **because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers;** it was a direct punishment. V. 7. **And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah, the king's son,** probably a royal prince of an older generation, **and Azrikam, the governor of the house,** a high officer of the royal palace, perhaps chief chamberlain, **and Elkanah, that was next to the king,** his minister or chancellor. V. 8. **And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren** (note the feature of civil war brought out) **two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters,** whom they probably captured by a raid upon the cities of Judah, **and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.** This was a terrible blow for the southern kingdom, and showed the character of the war as a barbarous strife between brother nations. V. 9. **But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded,** he still maintained his position in the midst of the idolatrous nation; **and he went out before the host that came to Samaria,** before they had reached the capital **and said unto them, Behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, He hath delivered them into your hand,** not on account of the superiority of Israel's arms and valor, **and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven,** in a frantic slaughter, in an unprovoked carnage, whereby they had abused their victory. V. 10. **And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you,** treating them as slaves of heathen nations, such as were captured in rightful war; **but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord, your God?** Their own national sins were of such a nature that they could hardly set themselves up as judges of their brethren, to punish them with such unexampled harshness and barbarous cruelty. V. 11. **Now, hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again,** set them at liberty, **which ye have taken captive of your brethren; for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you,** they would add to their guilt by this unnatural and sinful cruelty. Cp. Lev. 25, 39—46. V. 12. **Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim,** some of the princes of Israel themselves, **Azariah, the son of Johanan, Berechiah, the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah, the son of Shallum, and Amasa, the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war,** adding their indignant protest to that of Oded, v. 13. **and said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither,** into the city; **for whereas we have offended against the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel,** their debt was even then so great that a further increase would bring the Lord's punishment upon them in unendurable measure. V. 14. **So the armed men,** overcome by the earnestness of the remonstrances, **left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.** V. 15. **And the men which were expressed by name,** very likely the same princes of Ephraim who had exhibited the fine measure of courage in stopping the procession of the captives with their armed escort, **rose up and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them,** in a decent outfit of clothes, **and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them,** because they should return home happy and cheerful, **and carried all the feeble of them,** literally, "the stumblers," such as stumbled for weariness, **upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm-trees,** on their southeastern border. **Then they returned to Samaria.** It was a fine example of brotherly love, expressed in a beautiful manner, a refreshing incident in the midst of a history full of unpleasant narratives, a lesson also for our day,

when true charity has become almost unknown, in spite of all boasting.

AHAZ, DISTRESSED BY ASSYRIA, CONTINUES IN HIS WICKEDNESS. — V. 16. **At that time,** when Judah had just suffered this severe defeat, besides losing the harbor of Eloth, on the Red Sea, to the Syrians, **did King Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him,** since Assyria was a mighty empire and was gaining in strength. V. 17. **For again the Edomites,** freed from the sovereignty of Judah by the campaign of Rezin of Syria, **had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.** These raids were made along the southern and southeastern border. V. 18. **The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country,** the lowlands toward the Mediterranean, **and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof,** all cities along the Philistine border in the west and southwest; **and they dwelt there.** V. 19. **For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz, king of Israel,** given this title because he was guilty of all the idolatry of the kings of Israel; **for he,** Ahaz, **made Judah naked,** he had behaved in a dissolute manner in the nation and with its people, **and transgressed sore against the Lord.** V. 20. **And Tilgathpilneser, king of Assyria,** welcoming the opportunity to interfere in the affairs of the nations to the south, **came unto him and distressed him,** added to his burdens by oppressing him all the more, **but strengthened him not.** V. 21. **For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord and out of the house of the king and of the princes,** plundering the treasures of the kingdom in his vain attempts to find relief, **and gave it unto the king of Assyria; but he helped him not.** V. 22. **And in the time of his distress,** when he should have repented and turned to the Lord for help, **did he trespass yet more against the Lord. This is that King Ahaz,** an example of foolish perverseness for all times. V. 23. **For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus which smote him; and he said,** arguing foolishly in his blindness and attempting to excuse his further progress in wickedness, **Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them that they may help me,** the very argument used in our days by such as sell their souls for the sake of outward success. **But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.** V. 24. **And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God,** probably also to be used for tribute-money, **and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord,** thus suspending the worship both in the Holy Place and in the Most Holy Place; **and he made him altars,** devoted to idolatry, **in every corner of Jerusalem,** including the brazen altar erected by the priest Uriah after the pattern furnished him by the king, 2 Kings 16, 10—16. V. 25. **And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods,** thus making idolatry of the grossest kind the official religion of the kingdom, **and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.** V. 26. **Now, the rest of his acts and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.** V. 27. **And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem,** for the sake of his office, not of his person; **but they brought him not into the sepulchers of the kings of Israel,** they did not disgrace the tombs of the good kings of the line of David by placing his corpse by their side; **and Hezekiah, his son, reigned in his stead.** A terrible fate awaits him who refuses to be halted in his career of enmity toward God and dies in the hardness of his heart.

CHAPTER 29.

The Beginning of Hezekiah's Reign.

HEZEKIAH RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF JEHOVAH. — V. 1. **Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah,** very likely the prophet of that name, chap. 26, 5. Cp. 2 Kings 18. V. 2. **And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David, his father, had done;** he patterned his life of piety strictly after that of the founder of the dynasty. V. 3. **He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month,** the month Nisan, the first of the church-year, just as soon as he could well arrange for it, **opened the doors of the house of the Lord,** which had been closed by his father, chap. 28, 24, **and repaired them,** put them in order for constant use. V. 4. **And he brought in the priests and the Levites,** who had, of course, been dismissed when the worship of Jehovah was suspended, **and gathered them together into the east street,** literally, "in the broad way toward the east," either in the Court of the Priests or in some open space outside of the Temple area, v. 5. **and said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves,** this special consecration being required whenever the Levites were to enter upon their ministry, Ex. 19, 10, **and sanctify the house of the Lord God**

of your fathers, putting it into condition to be used in the service of Jehovah once more, and carry forth the filthiness, every evidence of idolatrous customs and worship, out of the Holy Place. V. 6. For our fathers, particularly Ahaz and his generation, have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord, our God, and have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs, as one does in utter contempt of a thing. Note the heaping of parallel, synonymous expressions to designate the greatness of the transgression described by Hezekiah. V. 7. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, those leading to the Sanctuary proper, thereby discontinuing the regular sacrifices to Jehovah, and have put out the lamps, those illuminating the Holy Place, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place unto the God of Israel. The lawful worship of Jehovah had been abandoned entirely. V. 8. Wherefore the wrath of the Lord, as shown in His severe displeasure and punishment, was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He hath delivered them to trouble, to commotion and horror, Deut. 28, 25, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes; for the country had been laid waste and its resources drained by the successive raids and wars, as they knew only too well. V. 9. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, chap. 28, 6, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this, chap. 28, 5. 17. 18. V. 10. Now it is in mine heart, he had firmly resolved upon this course, to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, by restoring the covenant which had repeatedly been made with Jehovah as the one true God, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. V. 11. My sons, so the king addresses the Levites in a familiar, persuasive address, be not now negligent, by drawing back from the king and delaying or hindering his proposed reformation; for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that ye should minister unto Him and burn incense, taking up all the work of their ministry according to the Lord's precepts, and helping the king carry out his plans for the restoration of the ancient law and order. V. 12. Then the Levites arose: Mahath, the son of Amasai, and Joel, the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites, this family being especially distinguished among the Levites; and of the sons of Merari: Kish, the son of Abdi, and Azariah, the son of Jehalelel; and of the Gershonites: Joah, the son of Zimnah, and Eden, the son of Joah; v. 13. and of the sons of Elizaphan: Shimri and Jeiel; and of the sons of Asaph: Zechariah and Mattaniah; v. 14. and of the sons of Heman: Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun: Shemaiah, and Uzziel. These fourteen chiefs among the Levites undertook the task of preparing their brethren and cleansing the house of the Lord. V. 15. And they gathered their brethren and sanctified themselves, by taking the usual measures to purify themselves from any defilements, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord; for the king's command was founded on the precepts of the Law, to cleanse the house of the Lord. V. 16. And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, within the Sanctuary and especially within the veil, where the Levites were not permitted to enter, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the Temple of the Lord, whatever idolatrous vessels and remains of idolatrous offerings they found, into the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron, where the uncleanness could be burned and the ashes swept down with the winter rains into the Dead Sea. V. 17. Now, they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord; so long it took them to remove the accumulated filth of the courts. So they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; that much longer it took them to remove the filth from the sanctuary proper; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end. V. 18. Then they went in to Hezekiah the king and said, We have cleansed all the house of the Lord and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, those used in the sacrifices, and the showbread table, with all the vessels thereof, for all these things had no longer been in use during the last years of Ahaz. V. 19. Moreover, all the vessels which King Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, including Solomon's altar of burnt offering, the brazen sea, and the lavers on the stands, 2 Kings 16, 14. 17, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the Lord. Note: It is a special sign of God's grace if a person is kept in the ways of the Lord and does not turn from them either to the right or to the left.

THE SERVICE OF THE TEMPLE SET IN ORDER. V. 20. Then Hezekiah the king rose early, full of anxious zeal to complete the cleansing of the Temple, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the Lord. Since all the people of his kingdom could not be reached, he wanted at least the princes of Jerusalem to be the representatives of the people. V. 21. And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, the number seven being the sacred number, for a sin-offering for the kingdom, for the sins of the king and his predecessors, and for the Sanctuary, for the priests themselves and for

the desecration of the Sanctuary, and for Judah, for all the members of the nation who had consented to the introduction of idolatry. And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord, to make an atonement for all the trespasses and sins as indicated. V. 22. So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar, as the ritual of sacrifices required, Lev. 8, 14—24; likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. They killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. V. 23. And they brought forth the he-goats for the sin-offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them, thus signifying that the act of atonement, while made directly by the princes, was done for the entire nation. V. 24. And the priests killed them; and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, for the purpose of obtaining a purification for sin, Lev. 14, 20, to make an atonement for all Israel; for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin-offering should be made for all Israel. The sacrifices agreed, in general, with the precepts of Lev. 4. V. 25. And he set the Levites, those designated for that work, 1 Chron. 16, 4; 25, 6, in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, the former being a guitarlike zither or lute, and the latter a small harp, according to the commandment of David and of Gad, the king's seer, and Nathan, the prophet, for the latter two had advised and assisted David in arranging the Temple service; for so was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets, the Lord Himself having acted through the agency of His prophets. V. 26. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, those invented and introduced by David, and the priests with the trumpets, for the blowing of these was their special privilege, Num. 10. V. 27. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar, when everything was in readiness for the service. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel, the instruments of David governed and led the entire orchestra as it played with full force in the intervals of the psalm or psalms. V. 28. And all the congregation worshiped, and the singers sang, the psalm was intoned, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished, the musical performance of praise being continued during the whole time of the offering. V. 29. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped, in grateful adoration. V. 30. Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded, they had done so before the beginning of the service, the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, some of the psalms composed by the royal singer, and of Asaph, the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, literally, "unto gladness," until their hearts were lifted up in ecstasy; and they bowed their heads and worshiped. V. 31. Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, by having filled their hands with the sacrifices of atonement; come near and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord. The sin- and trespass-offerings having been made in order to remove the guilt of the king and the people, peace-offerings were now in order to establish the relation of the covenant between Jehovah and His people once more. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings, with which sacrificial meals were connected; and as many as were of a free heart, in making vows to Jehovah, burnt offerings. V. 32. And the number of the burnt offerings which the congregation brought was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the Lord, presented by the rulers of the people for the nation or congregation. V. 33. And the consecrated things, the animals presented as thank-offerings, were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. V. 34. But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings, a task which they were supposed to perform themselves; wherefore their brethren, the Levites, did help them, it being a case of unavoidable necessity, of an emergency, till the work was ended, and until the other priests, those who came in from the outlying cities, had sanctified themselves; for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests, they displayed greater alacrity than the priests, probably because the latter had become more deeply involved in idolatry under Ahaz. V. 35. And also the burnt offerings were in abundance, that was the second reason why the Levites were drafted into service, with the fat of the peace-offerings and the drink-offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order, the newly consecrated Temple reopened for the service of Jehovah. V. 36. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people, had made their hearts willing with such promptness; for the thing was done suddenly, with unexpected readiness on the part of the majority of the nation. One of the surest proofs of true piety is the rejection of idolatry in every form and the eager participation in the worship of the true God.

CHAPTER 30.

The Celebration of the Passover Festival.

THE FESTIVAL PROCLAIMED BY THE KING. — V. 1. **And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah,** to the entire congregation adhering to the worship of Jehovah, **and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh,** the chief tribes of the northern kingdom, as many of them as were left after the bulk of the people had been led into captivity by the king of Assyria, **that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel,** for he was anxious to restore the observance of the festival, as in ancient days. V. 2. **For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem,** upon the occasion of the rededication of the Temple, **to keep the Passover in the second month,** as the Lord had provided for in cases of emergency, Num. 9, 10. 11. V. 3. **For they could not keep it at that time because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently;** they were slow about putting away the personal defilements and about returning to Jerusalem; **neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem,** the time had been too brief to summon them all for a general celebration. V. 4. **And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.** V. 5. **So they established a decree,** they settled the matter, resolved upon their course of action, **to make proclamation throughout all Israel,** the entire country occupied by the tribes, **from Beersheba,** in the extreme south, **even to Dan,** in the far north, **that they should come to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem; for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written,** with an attendance of all the men of the congregation, as the precept of the Lord required; it had been celebrated more as a local festival. V. 6. **So the posts,** special runners, acting as messengers of the king, **went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and He will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria;** for both Pul and Tiglath-pileser had taken away large numbers of Israelites captive into Northern Media, the latter in two campaigns, 2 Kings 15, 29; 17, 6. V. 7. **And be not ye like your fathers and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation,** as ye see; for the territory of the northern tribes was now lying desolate. V. 8. **Now, be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were,** the picture being that of a stubborn animal refusing to yield to guidance, **but yield yourselves unto the Lord,** submitting to His guidance by giving Him their hand, **and enter into His Sanctuary which He hath sanctified forever; and serve the Lord, your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you.** V. 9. **For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive,** through their intercession and the power of their example, **so that they shall come again into this land; for the Lord, your God, is gracious and merciful and will not turn away His face from you if ye return unto Him.** This appeal to repentance is always held out before every sinner, bidding him return to the Lord in true penitence. V. 10. **So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun,** toward the north and northwest. **But they laughed them to scorn and mocked them,** the majority of those invited ridiculed the messengers and even openly insulted them. V. 11. **Nevertheless, divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem;** they heeded the invitation, because their hearts were struck by the appeal of the king. Even so there are always some in the great mass of people who heed the invitation of the Gospel and accept Jesus, their Savior. V. 12. **Also in Judah,** rather, "in Judah, on the other hand," by way of contrast, **the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord;** they were practically unanimous in their acceptance of the invitation. There is always a better opportunity for the Word of God in a community where it is in general use.

THE JOYFUL CELEBRATION. — V. 13. **And there assembled at Jerusalem much people,** a great multitude, **to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread,** as the Passover Festival was also called, because the two festivals were always celebrated together, **in the second month, a very great congregation.** V. 14. **And they,** fired with the enthusiasm of the reformation, **arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away,** those which had been used for idolatrous purposes, **and cast them into the brook Kidron.** V. 15. **Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month; and the priests and the Levites were ashamed,** they were put to shame and stimulated to greater zeal by the enthusiasm of the people, **and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the Lord.** V. 16. **And they stood in their place**

after their manner, as it was prescribed for the sacrifices of the day, **according to the Law of Moses, the man of God. The priests sprinkled the blood which they received of the hand of the Levites,** either because the Levites slaughtered the paschal lambs for such of the Israelites as were unclean, or because they handed the basins to the priests from the line of waiting men, since the number was so great. V. 17. **For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified,** not Levitically clean; **therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord.** V. 18. **For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves,** not gone through the rite of purification as demanded before this festival, **yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written,** a feature opposed to the Law, Num. 9, 6. **But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one** v. 19. **that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers,** eager to enter into the covenant relation with Him once more, **though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary,** even if he had not complied with the strict ritual of purification. V. 20. **And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people.** It was either that in consequence of their transgression they had reason to fear disease and even death, Lev. 15, 31, or that some of them had already been stricken with some malady. V. 21. **And the children of Israel,** the members of the congregation in general, **that were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord,** their psalms accompanied by the playing of the Temple orchestra as provided for by David. V. 22. **And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord,** literally, "he spake to the heart," he addressed cordial, loving, encouraging words to them. **And they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings,** in connection with which sacrificial feasts were held, **and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers,** confessing Him with praise and thanksgiving. V. 23. **And the whole assembly,** filled with joyful enthusiasm, **took counsel to keep other seven days; and they kept other seven days with gladness.** V. 24. **For Hezekiah, king of Judah,** in order to make this extension of the festival possible, **did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes,** joining the king in his munificence, **gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves,** that is, they had sanctified themselves during the first week of the festival in order that a sufficient number might be on hand. V. 25. **And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel and that dwelt in Judah,** proselytes from heathen nations, **rejoiced.** V. 26. **So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem,** in point of attendance and unrestrained enthusiasm. V. 27. **Then the priests, the Levites,** of the tribe of Levi, **arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling-place,** the habitation of God's holiness, **even unto heaven.** Even in times of general trouble and distress the Spirit of the Lord is busily engaged in the hearts of at least some men in leading them to the knowledge of truth and in making them willing to serve their God with all their heart.

CHAPTER 31.

Further Measures for Restoring the True Worship.

Provision Made for the Levites. — V. 1. **Now, when all this was finished,** at the end of the great Passover celebration, **all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah and brake the images in pieces,** the statues consecrated to Baal, **and cut down the groves,** the wooden pillars, or Asherim, erected in honor of Astarte, **and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin,** that is, the southern kingdom, **in Ephraim also and Manasseh,** in the northern kingdom, **until they had utterly destroyed them all;** wherever they had influence in their own circles they eradicated every vestige of idolatry. **Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.** The pure worship of Jehovah had been restored throughout the land of Canaan, wherever members of the ancient tribes were living, and the people looked forward to a happy future of national peace and prosperity. V. 2. **And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses,** as arranged by David, each one being assigned his proper place and duty, **every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace-offerings,**

the two chief sacrifices of the Jewish worship, **to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the Lord,** in the Sanctuary proper as well as in the Court of the Priests, for the liturgical service took place entirely in the latter part of the Temple area. V. 3. **He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings,** what the king contributed in sacrificial animals out of his own possessions, **to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths,** when special sacrifices were required, **and for the new moons, and for the set feasts,** the great festivals of the Jewish Church, **as it is written in the Law of the Lord,** Num. 28 and 29; Lev. 23; Deut. 16. V. 4. **Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites,** the firstlings and tithes of the increase of the cattle and the field, Ex. 23, 19; Num. 18, 8. 12. 21—25; Lev. 27, 30—33, **that they might be encouraged in the Law of the Lord,** devote their entire time to the work of their office, free from ordinary earthly cares. V. 5. **And as soon as the commandment came abroad,** as soon as it was spread forth in all directions, in all parts of the kingdom, **the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.** This duty had naturally been neglected during the time when idolatry had invaded the land and only a comparatively small number of believing worshipers of Jehovah remained. V. 6. **And concerning the children of Israel and Judah that dwelt in the cities of Judah,** who owned no farms or orchards, **they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep,** for there were pastures in the neighborhood of the cities, **and the tithe of holy things,** heave-offerings of all consecrated things, **which were consecrated unto the Lord, their God, and laid them by heaps,** each of the several products and offerings by itself. V. 7. **In the third month they began** to lay the foundation of the heaps, at the time when the wheat-harvest began, **and finished them in the seventh month,** the time when the orchards had yielded their increase. V. 8. **And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord,** for working such eager willingness, **and His people Israel,** for their faithfulness in heeding the command of the Lord. V. 9. **Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps,** discussed with them regarding the disposal of the offerings and the possible sufficiency of the offerings for the purpose which they were intended to serve. V. 10. **And Azariah, the chief priest of the house of Zadok, answered him and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and have left plenty,** the method had proved more than satisfactory; **for the Lord hath blessed His people; and that which is left is this great store.** It is an easy matter for the members of Christ's Church to meet all the needs of the Gospel, both in providing for home purposes and in sending out men to the foreign fields.

THE TITHES AND THE DEDICATED THINGS. — V. 11. **Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers,** special rooms for storage, **in the house of the Lord;** either the old ones were repaired or additional ones were built. **And they prepared them,** v. 12. **and brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully,** with conscientious care; **over which Cononiah, the Levite, was ruler, and Shimei, his brother, was the next,** these two men having charge of all the stores as deposited in the Temple under this arrangement. V. 13. **And Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah were overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei, his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah, the ruler of the house of God.** These two having given the orders, the appointments were made at once. V. 14. **And Kore, the son of Imnah, the Levite, the porter toward the east,** where the main entrance of the Temple was, **was over the free-will offerings of God,** the portion of the peace-offerings belonging to Jehovah, and by Him designated for the use of the priests, **to distribute the oblations of the Lord and the most holy things,** the part of the sin- and trespass-offerings to be eaten by the priests in the Temple. V. 15. **And next him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah,** as his assistants, **in the cities of the priests, in their set office,** rather, "in faithfulness," for they also worked with conscientious application, **to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small,** with absolute fairness to all; v. 16. **beside their genealogy of males,** the register of all male children, **from three years old and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord,** consecrated to the Temple service, **his daily portion for their service in their charges according to their courses;** each one who was entitled to it received his share of the income of the Temple; v. 17. **both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers,** those registered in the genealogical lists, **and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses;** v. 18. **and to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their**

sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation, all these being registered in the lists of the tribe of Levi; **for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness,** that is, in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in the holy thing, righteously distributing the offerings which they were entitled to receive for that purpose; v. 19. **also of the sons of Aaron, the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities,** the pasturelands of the priestly cities being assigned to them, Deut. 25, 34; Num. 35, 5, **in every several city, the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.** All those who were included in the tribe of Levi were provided for in accordance with the precept of Jehovah. V. 20. **And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah and wrought that which was good,** of real value, **and right,** in agreement with the Law, **and truth,** done in all faithfulness, **before the Lord, his God.** V. 21. **And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God,** in the cause of true religion, **and in the Law, and in the commandments, to seek his God,** while he made it his object to set the kingdom on the old footing in its relation to the covenant God, **he did it with all his heart, and prospered.** Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

CHAPTER 32.

The Last Part of Hezekiah's Reign.

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION.—V. 1. **After these things and the establishment thereof,** after the true worship of Jehovah had been reestablished and properly regulated by Hezekiah, **Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and entered into Judah,** on a campaign of conquest, **and encamped against the fenced cities,** the fortified towns, especially along the frontier, **and thought to win them for himself,** literally, "to break into them," to conquer and subdue them. V. 2. **And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,** his face being set against the capital for war, Ashdod and Lachish having already fallen, Is. 20, 1, and the siege of Libnah having begun, v. 3. **he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men,** his payment of tribute having failed to stop the advance of the Assyrian army, 2 Kings 18, 14—16, **to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city,** by filling up, and covering over, cisterns and wells, in order to cut off the enemy's supply of water; **and they did help him.** V. 4. **So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains,** by covering over the cisterns and removing all evidences of the presence of any pools, **and the brook that ran through the midst of the land,** the Gihon, the brook of the Valley of Ben-hinnom, whose waters they deflected into the city by a subterranean channel, **saying, Why should the king of Assyria come and find much water?** By cutting off the supply of water from the besieging army, the Jews would add materially to its distress and to the difficulties of a siege. V. 5. **Also he strengthened himself,** was filled with new energy and enterprise, **and built up all the wall that was broken,** apparently since the time of Joash, king of Israel, chap. 25, 23, **and raised it up to the towers,** providing the wall with special towers for defense, **and another wall without,** he repaired the wall enclosing the lower city, **and repaired Millo in the City of David,** the castle of the upper city, **and made darts, missiles of defense, and shields in abundance,** he prepared very carefully for a siege. V. 6. **And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city,** the large open space near the gate of Oriental cities, **and spake comfortably to them,** he addressed them in an encouraging, inspiring strain, saying, v. 7. **Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him,** they had the protection of the great, invisible host of the Lord's angels, 2 Kings 6, 16. V. 8. **With him is an arm of flesh,** on the side of the Assyrian king was only human strength, which, over against God, is nothing but the greatest weakness; **but with us is the Lord, our God, to help us and to fight our battles.** With God on their side, the believers are always in the majority. **And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah,** they relied upon them, trusted in them. V. 9. **After this did Sennacherib, king of Assyria, send his servants to Jerusalem,** (**but he himself laid siege against Lachish,** a fortress on the Philistine border, on the road to Egypt, which was his real goal, **and all his power with him,** all the armed forces under his sovereignty,) **unto Hezekiah, king of Judah, and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem, saying,** v. 10. **Thus saith Sennacherib, king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem?** literally, "On what are you placing your trust and sitting in restraint?" He meant to in-

timate that they were as foolish as a rat that deliberately walks into a trap to be safe from capture. V. 11. **Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The Lord, our God, shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?** Like all unbelievers, Sennacherib tried to ridicule the trust of the Jews and their king in the almighty power of Jehovah by speaking of the course taken by Hezekiah as one misleading the people. V. 12. **Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, of which** Sennacherib foolishly thought that they were sanctuaries of Jehovah, the true God, **and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar and burn incense upon it?** Cp. 2 Kings 18, 22. V. 13. **Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands anyways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?** V. 14. **Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, in making Assyria a world empire by ruthless conquests, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?** The fallacy of Sennacherib's argument consisted in this, that he tried to draw a conclusion from the powerlessness of the false gods to the supposed weakness of the true God. V. 15. **Now, therefore, let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade,** mislead, **you on this manner, neither yet believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand and out of the hand of my fathers; how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?** Cp. 2 Kings 18, 35; Is. 36, 20; 37, 11—13. V. 16. **And his servants spake yet more against the Lord God,** blasphemies which the present author does not repeat, **and against His servant Hezekiah.** V. 17. **He wrote also letters to rail on the Lord God of Israel,** 2 Kings 19, 9, **and to speak against Him, saying, As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver His people out of mine hand.** This letter was delivered to Hezekiah after his intention of obstinate resistance had become known. V. 18. **Then they,** the messengers on their first visit, **cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech,** in the Hebrew language, **unto the people of Jerusalem that were on the wall, to affright them and to trouble them, that they might take the city,** after having broken down the *morale* of its defenders by the methods here recounted. V. 19. **And they spake against the God of Jerusalem as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man,** placing Jehovah on a level with base idols. V. 20. **And for this cause Hezekiah the king and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.** Cp. 2 Kings 19, 14—34; Is. 37, 15—19. Those that trust in the Lord with all their heart remain firm in spite of all the threats of the enemy, relying on the power of Jehovah alone.

THE ASSYRIANS DESTROYED. THE END OF HEZEKIAH'S REIGN. — V. 21. **And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor,** the veteran soldiers, **and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria,** 2 Kings 19, 35—37. **So he,** who had boasted so inordinately of his invincible army, **returned with shame of face to his own land,** utterly humiliated, even in the eyes of his own subjects. **And when he was come into the house of his god,** when, after some time, he was worshiping in the temple of his chief idol, **they that came forth of his own bowels,** his own sons, **slew him there with the sword.** V. 22. **Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other,** whatever other enemies had designs against him, **and guided them on every side,** giving to His people the full measure of protection. V. 23. **And many,** including members of the neighboring nations, **brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem,** for they also had received the benefit of Jehovah's interposition, **and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.** V. 24. **In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord; and He spake unto him, and He gave him a sign,** wrought a miracle in making him well. Cp. 2 Kings 20, 1—11; Is. 38. V. 25. **But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up,** he yielded to a degree of pride in boastfully exhibiting his treasures to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, 2 Kings 20, 15; **therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem.** V. 26. **Notwithstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah,** Is. 39, 8; 2 Kings 20, 19. V. 27. **And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches,** in personal possessions and in gifts brought to him by neighboring nations, **and honor; and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields,** costly gilded weapons, **and for all manner of pleasant jewels,** various articles which were highly prized in those days; v. 28. **storehouses also for the increase of corn and wine and oil, and stalls for all man-**

ner of beasts, and cotes for flocks, folds for his small cattle. V. 29. **Moreover, he provided him cities,** probably to be understood of the watch-towers erected for the use of the shepherds, **and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God,** the Giver of all good gifts, **had given him substance very much.** V. 30. **This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon,** namely, at the approach of Sennacherib's army, **and brought it straight down to the west side of the City of David,** in a special subterranean canal. **And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.** Hezekiah's Pool, or reservoir, in the northwest part of Jerusalem still remains, and at least a part of the subterranean channel dug by him has been laid open.2) V. 31. **Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land,** very likely the king's miraculous recovery, **God left him, to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart;** it was a test of Hezekiah's faith and sincerity, especially in the matter of giving all glory to God alone, both for his health and for his possessions. V. 32. **Now, the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his goodness, all the various displays of his kindness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz,** Is. 36 to 39, **and in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel,** 2 Kings 18 to 20. V. 33. **And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchers of the sons of David, in a place higher on the slope than the tombs then occupied. And all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor at his death,** by the usual burning of spices, as in the case of Asa, chap. 16, 14. **And Manasseh, his son, reigned in his stead.** Hezekiah died in the true faith and was given the testimony that he was a king after the Lord's heart. Blessed is every one that heeds the warning of the Lord's servants in time and willingly returns from the way of error.

2) Barton, *Archeology and the Bible*, 198. 199.

CHAPTER 33.

The Reign of Manasseh and of Amon.

Manasseh's Wickedness. — V. 1. **Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem,** including the time of his captivity; v. 2. **but did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.** Cp. 2 Kings 21, 1—16. V. 3. **For he built again the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had broken down,** his purpose being to make them sanctuaries of idolatry; **and he reared up altars for Baalim,** a great many of them, **and made groves,** erected the wooden pillars consecrated to the goddess Astarte, **and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them,** thus introducing also the idolatry of the Chaldeans in addition to that of the Canaanites. V. 4. **Also, he built altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.** So he replaced the worship of Jehovah in the very house dedicated to His name with the abominations of idolatry. V. 5. **And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord,** thus openly worshiping the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars. V. 6. **And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom,** the Valley Ben-hinnom, southwest of Jerusalem, thus becoming guilty of the abominable practise of the Moabites. **Also, he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, he made use of** every form of sorcery and divination, even of that connected with the evil eye and with muttered and whispered charms, **and dealt with a familiar spirit and with wizards,** he actually appointed conjurors and soothsayers. **He wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger.** V. 7. **And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made,** probably an Asherah-pillar, **in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon, his son, In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put My name forever,** Ps. 132, 14; v. 8. **neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers,** 2 Sam. 7, 10, **so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them,** literally, "only that they observe," for that was the condition under which the Lord would keep them in that land, **according to the whole Law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.** V. 9. **So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err,** in leaving the right way which they had walked under pious Hezekiah, **and to do worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.** V. 10. **And the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people,** namely, by the mouth of His faithful prophets, 2 Kings 21, 11—16; but they would not hearken, idolatry had quickly and effectively hardened their

hearts once more. The same thing happens to-day when people who have been Christians deny the better knowledge and turn to the abominations of the children of the world. There are no greater enemies of Christianity than such as have denied its truths.

MANASSEH'S PUNISHMENT AND REPENTANCE. V. 11. **Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria,** according to Assyrian monuments, King Assurbanipal (or Esar-haddon), **which took Manasseh among the thorns,** that is, in fetters, **and bound him with fetters,** with double brass chains, **and carried him to Babylon,** which at that time was under the jurisdiction of the king of Assyria, the capital of one of the tributary countries. V. 12. **And when he was in affliction,** in this shameful captivity, **he besought the Lord, his God,** in true sorrow over his apostasy, **and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,** v. 13. **and prayed unto Him,** confessing his great sins and asking for mercy; **and He was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.** In restoring Manasseh to his kingdom, as a tributary monarch, the Assyrian king undoubtedly was influenced by political motives, principally that of making Judah a buffer state against Egypt, Assyria's rival for supremacy. **Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God;** he acknowledged Him as his Lord and Ruler, and followed His word. V. 14. **Now, after this he built a wall without the City of David,** probably the one on which Hezekiah had done some work, **on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in of the Fish Gate,** this outer wall thus running from the northeast corner of Zion in a northerly direction and then crossing over the valley to make a junction with the main wall near the upper fort, in the place where the Temple might be most easily attacked, **and compassed about Ophel,** on the southern slope of the Temple mount, **and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah,** veteran commanders. V. 15. **And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord and in Jerusalem,** v. 4. 5. 7, **and cast them out of the city,** he removed the worst abominations, though by no means all. V. 16. **And he repaired the altar of the Lord,** the altar of burnt offerings, **and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings,** in order to renew the covenant relation, **and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel.** V. 17. **Nevertheless, the people did sacrifice still in the high places,** the sanctuaries on the hills, **yet unto the Lord, their God, only.** This act did not always imply idolatry, but often led to the practise of it. V. 18. **Now, the rest of the acts of Manasseh and his prayer unto his God,** made at the time of his conversion while in captivity, **and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel,** from which the inspired writer culled the information here offered. V. 19. **His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves,** Asherah-pillars, **and graven images, before he was humbled, behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers,** in the history of Hosai. In the latter part of his reign, Manasseh is an example of a person who turns to the Lord in true repentance and is accepted by the Lord. At the same time, his history contains a warning not to deny the faith and risk eternal rejection, for we do not know when God's period of grace will be at an end.

THE REIGN OF AMON. — V. 20. **So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house,** in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza, 2 Kings 21, 18; **and Amon, his son, reigned in his stead.** V. 21. **Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem.** Cp. 2 Kings 21, 17—26. V. 22. **But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh, his father; for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh, his father, had made, and served them,** having evidently restored them to their places of honor; v. 23. **and humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh, his father, had humbled himself,** he was addicted to idolatry all his life; **but Amon trespassed more and more.** V. 24. **And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house,** a fate which served as a punishment upon his idolatry. V. 25. **But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon,** for having interfered with the office of the king and endangered the welfare of the country by his assassination; **and the people of the land made Josiah, his son, king in his stead.** Assassinations and lynch justice are strictly against the will of the Lord, who is opposed to every form of anarchy and to every tendency in that direction.

CHAPTER 34.

The Reforms of Josiah.

Josiah Restores the True Worship.—V. 1. **Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign,** having been elevated to the throne by the people of the country, who wanted a descendant of David as their king, and not an assassin, **and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.** V. 2. **And he did that which was right,** in strict accordance with the Law, **in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David, his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.** His character and manner of comporting himself throughout his reign was such as to make his rule stand out most honorably among that of the kings of David's line. V. 3. **For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young,** about sixteen years old, **he began to seek after the God of David, his father,** openly showing his preference for the ancient worship; **and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves,** the wooden Asherah-pillars, **and the carved images,** those fashioned out of wood, **and the molten images,** those cast of metal. V. 4. **And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence,** wherever these evidences of Canaanitish idolatry were found; **and the images,** the sun-statues erected according to Chaldean customs, **that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves,** the wooden statues consecrated to Astarte, **and the carved images and the molten images he brake in pieces and made dust of them,** as Moses had done with the golden calf at Horeb, **and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them,** thus exposing the guilt of those who were lying in those graves before all men. V. 5. **And he burned the bones of the priests upon their altars,** after having taken their skeletons from their graves, thereby defiling the altars of idolatry, **and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.** V. 6. **And so,** in the course of the next years, **did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim,** the central portion of what had been the northern kingdom, **and Simeon,** the cities in the south of Judah, **even unto Naphtali,** what was later known as Upper Galilee, **with their mattocks round about,** or rather, in their ruins round about, in their deserted suburbs, for the Assyrian kings Shalmaneser and Sargon had devastated their territory, and the people who remained in the mountains of the north turned to Judah and expected the kings of the southern kingdom to protect them as far as possible. V. 7. **And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel,** thus removing all evidences of idolatrous practises as far as his authority extended, **he returned to Jerusalem.** Note that Josiah did not attempt to get the people of the northern part of Canaan away from their allegiance to the Assyrian kings, but confined himself strictly to the destruction of idolatry. V. 8. **Now, in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house,** removed the defilement of idolatry from the Temple, **he sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah, the governor of the city, and Joah, the son of Joahaz, the recorder,** among the highest officials of the realm, **to repair the house of the Lord, his God,** that is, to order and to supervise the repairs. V. 9. **And when they came to Hilkiah, the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel,** all the members of the northern kingdom who had remained in the devastated territory and had turned back to the ancient worship of Jehovah, **and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem,** rather, and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem. All these people brought their Temple tax to Jerusalem and the money was taken care of as provided for. V. 10. **And they,** the men entrusted with this work, **put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord,** that is, the workmasters or foremen, **and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord to repair and amend the house,** to strengthen it wherever the walls showed signs of weakness or the floors threatened to give way; v. 11. **even to the artificers and builders gave they it to buy hewn stone and timber for couplings,** for girders to carry the roof, **and to floor the houses,** to provide joists for the various buildings of the Temple, **which the kings of Judah had destroyed,** deliberately letting them go to ruin for want of proper care. V. 12. **And the men did the work faithfully,** with conscientious care; **and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward,** to direct the execution of the work with which they were charged, **and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music,** literally, "all who had skill in instruments of song," it being necessary to connect this phrase with the following verse. V. 13. **Also they were over the bearers of burdens,** over the unskilled laborers, **and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service; and of the Levites there were scribes**

and officers and porters. As in the case of Josiah, God still, from time to time, awakens and strengthens pious men who work for the purification of the Church.

THE FINDING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW AND ITS EFFECTS. — V. 14. **And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, and when the** Temple itself had thoroughly been searched in order to estimate the extent of the damage, **Hilkiah, the priest, found a Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses,** very likely the Temple copy, the authentic copy by the hand of Moses, which had been lost during the profanation of the Temple under Manasseh. V. 15. **And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan, the scribe,** the king's secretary, **I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord,** all the books of Moses being included in this designation. **And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan,** this being in the form of a roll, as books were then written. V. 16. **And Shaphan carried the book to the king and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it,** he was able to report that the king's orders were being executed with proper care. V. 17. **And they have gathered together,** poured out, weighed out **the money that was found in the house of the Lord, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and to the hand of the workmen.** V. 18. **Then Shaphan, the scribe, told the king, saying, Hilkiah, the priest, hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king,** that is, certain sections of it, probably Deut. 28 to 30. V. 19. **And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the Law,** that **he rent his clothes,** not that he was unfamiliar with the sacred book, which had certainly been copied frequently, but because the words of the original made a much greater impression upon him, that his heart was affected more deeply than ever before. He showed the great grief and sorrow of his heart by his act of tearing open his garments at the breast. V. 20. **And the king commanded Hilkiah and Ahikam, the son of Shaphan,** who later was the father of Gedaliah and the protector of Jeremiah, **and Abdon** (or Achbor), **the son of Micah, and Shaphan, the scribe, and Asaiah, a servant of the king's,** his faithful body-guard, **saying,** v. 21. **Go, enquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah,** all the members of the Jewish Church and of the southern nation in particular, **concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us,** having been kindled by the many acts of idolatry and wickedness, **because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord to do after all that is written in this book.** V. 22. **And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah, the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvath** (or Tokehath), **the son of Hasrah** (or Harhas), **keeper of the wardrobe,** either the royal vestments or those of the Temple; **(now she dwelt in Jerusalem, in the college,** the second quarter, or district, **of the lower city;) and they spake to her to that effect,** as Josiah had commanded them. V. 23. **And she answered them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,** v. 24. **Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah,** Lev. 26; Deut. 28, v. 25. **because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands,** in their entire behavior; **therefore My wrath shall be poured out upon this place,** like a burning liquid from a vessel, **and shall not be quenched.** V. 26. **And as for the king of Judah who sent you to enquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard:** v. 27. **Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest His words against this place and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before Me, and didst rend thy clothes and weep before Me,** with all indications of true grief over the transgressions of Israel and Judah, **I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.** V. 28. **Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and upon the inhabitants of the same,** Josiah was to be spared the sight of the punishment and sorrow which would come upon Judah-Jerusalem. **So they brought the king word again.** V. 29. **Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem,** for a service of prayer and penitence. V. 30. **And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small,** those of the rich and influential class together with the poor and unknown; **and he read in their ears all the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the house of the Lord,** in one of the most impressive services ever held in the Temple. V. 31. **And the king stood in his place,** probably on the pulpit-like platform used by Solomon, **and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes,**

whether these precepts pertained to the covenant relation or to the general relation of the people to all men, with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. V. 32. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it, to arise in token of their agreement to this pledge. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. V. 33. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, removing all evidences of idolatry as far as his authority extended, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord, their God; he was very emphatic in binding them to serve the true God. And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers. With Josiah's example in mind, every Christian congregation will oppose all offenses, every abomination of ungodliness, every indication of worldliness, and strive to walk without blemish before the Lord.

CHAPTER 35.

Events in the Last Part of Josiah's Reign.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER. — V. 1. Moreover, Josiah kept a Passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem. And they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, this being the proper date for its celebration. V. 2. And he, in preparing for this great festival, set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord, serving in their courses, they were admonished to be ready for their duties in the manner prescribed in the Lord's precepts, v. 3. and said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord, set apart for His service, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, did build; for it had evidently been removed temporarily while the floors were being repaired; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders, this ancient task of the Levites was no longer necessary. Serve now the Lord, your God, and His people Israel, namely, in those other duties which pertained to their office. V. 4. And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, each division being composed of the members of one father-house, according to the writing of David, king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon, his son, these two having established the courses and noted down the divisions, 1 Chron. 23 to 26. V. 5. And stand in the Holy Place according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren, the people, after the divisions of the father-houses which had existed since ancient times, and after the division of the families of the Levites. It seems that to every division of a non-Levitical father-house there was a corresponding part of a Levitical father-house serving in the Temple. V. 6. So kill the passover, the lamb prescribed for that purpose, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses; they were to observe carefully the ceremony of washing before they handed the priests the blood to sprinkle against the altar. V. 7. And Josiah gave to the people, from his own possessions, of the flock, lambs and kids, the Law leaving the choice open, Ex. 12, 5, all for the Passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks. These were of the king's substance. V. 8. And his princes, following the example of the king, gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the Passover offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle, these free gifts consisting also of lambs and kids, and three hundred oxen. V. 9. Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for Passover offerings five thousand small cattle and five hundred oxen. V. 10. So the service was prepared, everybody being exactly familiar with the work which was expected of him. And the priests stood in their place and the Levites in their courses according to the king's commandment, everything being arranged so that the lambs, after their blood had been drained off, could quickly be delivered to the various housefathers, to be roasted and eaten as the Law required. V. 11. And they killed the passover, each housefather performing this task himself; and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, as it was handed to them in special basins after the slaughter, and the Levites flayed them. V. 12. And they removed the burnt offerings, set aside the parts of each sacrificial animal that was to be burned on the altar, that they might give according to the division of the families of the people, namely, these separated pieces, which were to be offered as burnt sacrifices, to offer unto the Lord as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen, preparing them as peace-offerings, to be eaten as a joyful festival in part, that is, after

taking away the fat that was to be burned. V. 13. **And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance**, Ex. 12, 8. 9; Deut. 16, 7; **but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people**, this being done, of course, on all the days of the Feast of Unleavend Bread, connected with the Passover proper. V. 14. **And afterward they made ready for themselves and for the priests; because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busied in offering of burnt offerings and the fat**, that of the peace-offerings, **until night**, having begun about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, **therefore the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.** V. 15. **And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place**, in the station appointed to them, where they chanted their psalms, **according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun, the king's seer. And the porters waited at every gate**, both the singers and the porters being on duty, of course, on every day of the feast; **they might not depart from their service; for their brethren, the Levites, prepared for them**, so they all could take part in the great sacrificial feast. V. 16. **So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day**, all the other days being modeled after the first day of the festival, **to keep the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of King Josiah.** V. 17. **And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days**, the two being considered as one festival and the names later used as synonyms. V. 18. **And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel, the prophet**, even the great celebration of Hezekiah, chap. 30, having been eclipsed in splendor and solemnity; **neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** V. 19. **In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this Passover kept.** This great celebration was a last merciful visitation of the Lord upon Judah, who once more gave His people the purity and the splendor of the ancient worship, just as He in these last days of the world has once more given us the purity of the Gospel in all its splendid power.

JOSIAH SLAIN AT MEGIDDO. — V. 20. **After all this, when Josiah had prepared the Temple**, when his work of restoring the ancient worship had come to a close and an era of peace and prosperity might have been expected, **Necho, king of Egypt, came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates**, a great commercial city. **And Josiah went out against him**, either because he thought the neutrality of his country endangered, or because he felt that he must take the part of the Assyro-Babylonian king. V. 21. **But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah?** Pharaoh-Necho urged Josiah not to meddle in this affair, since he had no quarrel with him. **I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not.** What Necho believed to be the will of the Egyptian god whom he served, that he transferred to Jehovah of Israel, in order to persuade Josiah the more easily. V. 22. **Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself**, as Ahab of Israel had done in the battle against the Syrians, by wearing the armor and dress of a common soldier or officer, **that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo**, in the Plain of Jezreel, Necho having either brought up his army by fleet to the neighborhood of Carmel or marched up along the Mediterranean Sea. V. 23. **And the archers shot at King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded**, sick with the severity and with the pain of his wound. V. 24. **His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had**, probably one larger and more comfortable than his war-chariot. **And they brought him to Jerusalem; and he died and was buried in one of the sepulchers of his fathers**, in the tombs of the kings. **And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.** V. 25. **And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day**, probably taking one of the poems of Jeremiah for that purpose, **and made them an ordinance in Israel; and, behold, they are written in the lamentations**, a collection of poems chanted on certain public occasions by professional singers. V. 26. **Now, the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness**, all his acts of kindness, **according to that which was written in the Law of the Lord**, v. 27. **and his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.** He was one of the best-loved kings of the house of David, through whom God blessed His people, as He does through all faithful rulers.

CHAPTER 36.

The End of the Southern Kingdom.

The Reign of Jehoahaz, Johoiakim, and Jehoiachin. — V. 1. **Then the people of the land,** as before, in the case of Josiah and Uzziah, **took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem.** His name before his accession to the throne was Shallum, and the people chose him in preference to his older brother Eliakim, probably because they believed he would show an aggressive spirit over against the encroachments of Egypt. V. 2. **Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem,** but even in this short space of time managed to reintroduce idolatry, 2 Kings 23, 32. V. 3. **And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem,** removed him from office, **and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold** (over two hundred thousand dollars), this being laid upon the country as a punishment. The sequence of events is probably this: After the defeat and the death of Josiah, while Necho was still at Megiddo, the Jews made Jehoahaz king. His brother Eliakim may have complained to Necho, causing him to come to Jerusalem as soon as he could and depose the choice of the people, while the bulk of his army continued the campaign against Carchemish. V. 4. **And the king of Egypt made Eliakim, his brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name,** evidently at his own suggestion, **to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz, his brother, and carried him to Egypt,** where he died, Jer. 22, 10—12. Jehoiakim may have seemed to Necho a more willing tool and a fine sovereign for a tributary buffer state against Babylon, which was rapidly becoming a world empire. V. 5. **Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, his God.** Cp. 2 Kings 23, 36—24, 7. He freely gave the people all the license they wanted in serving false gods. His boastfulness and vanity is excellently portrayed by the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. 22, 13—19. V. 6. **Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,** after having conquered the greater part of Western Asia and broken the power of Necho east of the Mediterranean Sea, **and bound him in fetters,** after he had rebelled against him, **to carry him to Babylon.** So the idolatrous and proud Jewish king languished in chains. This was about in the year 603 before Christ, some three years after Nebuchadnezzar had made the first campaign to the southwest. V. 7. **Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon,** perhaps to make up for the tribute which Jehoiakim had refused to pay, **and put them in his temple at Babylon,** in the temple of Belus, Dan. 1, 2; 5, 2. V. 8. **Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and his abominations which he did,** his idolatry and other wickedness, **and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead.** Cp. 2 Kings 24, 8—17. V. 9. **Jehoiachin** (also called Jeconiah or Coniah) **was eight years old** (rather, eighteen) **when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,** continuing in all the idolatrous abominations of his predecessors, Ezek. 19, 5—7. V. 10. **And when the year was expired,** at the time of the year when campaigns usually began, **King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon with the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord,** the precious vessels remaining, which might well arouse the king's desire, **and made Zedekiah, his brother,** more exactly, his father's brother, his uncle, whose name before his accession had been Mattaniah, **king over Judah and Jerusalem.** If people deliberately sell themselves to do evil, the patience of the Lord is at length exhausted and He delivers them to destruction.

Zedekiah's Reign and the End of Judah. V. 11. **Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.** Cp. 2 Kings 24, 18—25, 21; Jer. 52. All the nobles, artisans, and craftsmen of the people having been removed, there remained only the laboring class and the farmers and gardeners. V. 12. **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, his God,** persisting in idolatry in the face of the Lord's punishment upon his predecessors, **and humbled not himself before Jeremiah, the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.** Cp. Jer. 37. V. 13. **And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God,** taking a solemn oath of loyalty from him, wherefore his league with Pharaoh-hophrah of Egypt included the crime of perjury; **but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.** That is the height of God's judgment upon man when He permits self-hardening to take place and delivers man to his own evil way of thinking. V. 14. **Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen,** thus agreeing with the king in his idolatrous practises; **and polluted the house of the Lord**

which He had hallowed in Jerusalem, by heathen sacrifices and customs. V. 15. **And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers,** especially the prophets Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah, **rising up betimes and sending,** that is, constantly and earnestly, **because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place,** wishing to save the people from the punishment which they were inviting upon their own heads. V. 16. **But they mocked the messengers of God,** as in the case of Jeremiah, Jer. 5, 12. 13, **and despised His words, and misused His prophets,** Jer. 32, 3, **until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people,** like a fire eating through into a high flame, **till there was no remedy,** till the state of affairs was past healing. V. 17. **Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees,** Nebuchadnezzar undertaking a third siege of Jerusalem, **who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary,** so called because they had profaned the Temple by their idolatry, **and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; He gave them all into his hand,** namely, when the city was captured after a siege lasting a year and a half, in the year 587 B. C. V. 18. **And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small,** those still remaining after the first sacking of the city, **and the treasures of the house of the Lord,** with the many presents of consecration, **and the treasures of the king and of his princes,** the entire contents of the royal treasury; **all these he brought to Babylon.** V. 19. **And they burned the house of God,** for the floors and the inner walls of the Temple were of wood, and therefore very inflammable, **and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof,** all those of value which they could not well transport to Babylon. V. 20. **And them that had escaped from the sword,** during the siege and at the capture of the city, **carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia,** 2 Kings 25, 9; Jer. 39, 8; 27, 7, v. 21. **to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths;** the Sabbatic years, as seasons of rest for all classes of people and for the land itself having been ignored for centuries, the Lord was now giving the land rest, Lev. 26, 34; **for as long as she lay desolate, she kept Sabbath,** for a mere handful of people remained in the land after Nebuchadnezzar's campaign, and many of these went down into Egypt in the course of time, **to fulfil threescore and ten years.** It seems that no attempt was made to colonize the land in the interval, and that Judah was actually desolate for seventy years. V. 22. **Now, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished,** Jer. 25, 12. 13, **the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia,** the Babylonian empire having meanwhile passed into the power of the Persian empire, **that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,** v. 23. **Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and He hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.** This had been revealed to Cyrus either directly or by the mouth of some prophet. **Who is there among you of all His people? The Lord, His God, be with him, and let him go up.** It was a free invitation calling upon the Jews to return to the land of their fathers. Note the kindness and mercy of the Lord in reinstating a remnant of His people in their country, since the Redeemer was to come out of Zion, born in Bethlehem from the stock of David.

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Ezra, written by the famous priest and scribe whose name it bears, covers a period of about eighty years, namely, that following the exile of the Jews, about 538 to 458 B. C. During this period six kings of Persia occupied the throne and were the sovereigns of the Jews: Cyrus the Great, his son Cambyses, the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I, son of Hystaspes, Xerxes I (known also as Ahasuerus), and Artaxerxes Longimanus. The book records the fulfilment of God's promise to bring His people back to Palestine. The book is divided into two distinct parts, the first part, chapters 1 to 6, telling of the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua in the year 536, and the second, chapters 7 to 10, relating the coming of Ezra in the year 458, together with the measures of reform introduced by him. Under Zerubbabel, who was made Tirshatha, or governor, of the

returned exiles, more than 40,000 Jews settled in Palestine once more, especially in and near Jerusalem; under Ezra, eighty years later, a second band returned to the land of their fathers. During the period covered by this book the Temple had been rebuilt and the true worship restored in Jerusalem. The exiles were from this time forth known as Jews. They did not form an independent nation, but their country was a province of Persia, until the entire empire was conquered by Alexander the Great, 331 B. C., when they, of course, passed under the jurisdiction of Macedonia, or Greece. It should be noted, finally, that the captivity of the Jews had at last cured them of their idolatry, for there are few evidences of idolatry or of false worship in Judea after the exile.1)

1) Cp. Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 38. 39; *Concordia Bible Class*, April, 1919, 49. 50.

CHAPTER 1.

The End of the Captivity.

The Proclamation of Cyrus. — V. 1. **Now, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia,** after the conquest of the Babylonian empire, the new empire, including Persia, Media, Babylonia, and Chaldea, having been founded in 536 B. C., **that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled,** Jer. 25, 12. 13, **the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom,** by having special couriers cry out the message, **and put it also in writing, saying,** v. 2. **Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth,** his empire at that time being a world empire; **and he hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah,** either by direct revelation or through the instruction of the prophet Daniel, who may have informed him of the prophecies concerning him and his career as written down by Isaiah some two hundred years before, Is. 44, 28; 46, 1—4. V. 3. **Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel** (He is the God, whom Cyrus acknowledged and worshiped as the one true God) **which is in Jerusalem.** V. 4. **And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth,** having settled down according to the advice of the Lord by Jeremiah, Jer. 29, 4—7, **let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts,** for pack-animals and for traveling, giving such a one all possible assistance, **beside the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem,** thereby contributing liberally toward the rebuilding of the Temple. Thus God uses also the mighty ones of the earth in His service as He chooses, thereby bringing the days of tribulation upon His people to an end.

The Return Arranged For. — V. 5. **Then rose up the chief of the fathers,** the heads of the divisions known as father-houses, **of Judah and Benjamin,** for these two tribes were chiefly concerned in this exile and the return, **and the priests and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised,** those in whose hearts the Lord had wrought the willingness to return to the land of their fathers and build up the country anew from the depths of desolation, **to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.** A good many Jews of Babylon could not make up their minds to return to Judah, since they were unwilling to relinquish the property they had gained in the land of their captivity. V. 6. **And all they that were about them,** all their friends and neighbors, **strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things,** showing great liberality toward the Jews in accordance with the king's proclamation, **beside all that was willingly offered,** given for the rebuilding of the Temple. The Lord made the Babylonians favorably disposed toward the Jews, in order to further His plans. V. 7. **Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord,** those which had been used in the Sanctuary of Solomon's Temple, **which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods,** 2 Chron. 36, 7; v. 8. **even those did Cyrus, king of Persia, bring forth by the hand of Mithredath, the treasurer,** who had charge of all these treasures, **and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar,** the Persian name for Zerubbabel, **the prince of Judah,** appointed governor of the returning exiles. V. 9. **And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold,** baskets or containers of a peculiar kind, **a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,** with chased or braided work, or they may have been sacrificial dishes serving for the pouring of the blood, v. 10. **thirty basins of gold,** covered vessels like large cups, **silver basins of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.** These larger and more costly vessels enumerated here amounted to a total of 2,499. V. 11. **All the vessels of gold and silver,** including those of minor value, **were five thousand**

and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity, when the exiles returned with all their goods, that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem. The exodus of the Jews from Babylon is rightly regarded as the type of another exodus which God has commanded the children of the New Covenant; for the Christians are under obligations to leave the corruptions of the world and the false churches, to go out from among them and be separate, 2 Cor. 6, 17—19.

CHAPTER 2.

Catalog of the Returning Jews and Their Possessions.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE PEOPLE. — V. 1. **Now, these are the children of the province,** for that is what Judah had now become, a mere province of the Persian empire, **that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away,** as distinguished from those who preferred to remain in Babylon or Persia, **whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city,** the city which was rebuilt and allotted to every one now; v. 2. **which came with Zerubbabel,** who had been appointed governor of the returned exiles in Judah: **Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mizpar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah.** All told, cp. Neh. 7, there were twelve priestly heads, who represented, in a way, the twelve tribes of Israel. **The number of the men of the people of Israel:** v. 3. **the children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred and seventy and two.** V. 4. **The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.** V. 5. **The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.** That many were enrolled in the lists of the descendants of Arah, but more than a hundred fewer actually settled in Judah and were there mustered, Neh. 7. V. 6. **The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.** V. 7. **The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.** V. 8. **The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.** V. 9. **The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.** V. 10. **The children of Bani** (or Binnui), **six hundred forty and two.** V. 11. **The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.** V. 12. **The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.** V. 13. **The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.** V. 14. **The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.** V. 15. **The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.** V. 16. **The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.** V. 17. **The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.** V. 18. **The children of Jorah** (or Hariph), **an hundred and twelve.** V. 19. **The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.** V. 20. **The children of Gibbar, ninety and five.** The name is really Gibeon, Neh. 7, 25; for the rest of the names from this point are those of the cities from which the fathers of the present exiles had come. V. 21. **The children of Bethlehem,** the former inhabitants of the city and their descendants, **an hundred twenty and three.** V. 22. **The men of Netophah,** a small town near Bethlehem, **fifty and six.** V. 23. **The men of Anathoth,** a Levitical city, the home of Jeremiah, against which he had prophesied in one of his severest predictions, Jer. 32, 27—35, **an hundred twenty and eight.** V. 24. **The children of Azmaveth** (also known as Beth-azmaveth), **forty and two.** V. 25. **The children of Kirjath-arim,** west of Jerusalem, **Chephirah, and Beeroth,** three cities of the Gibeonites, Josh. 9, 17, **seven hundred and forty and three.** V. 26. **The children of Ramah and Gaba,** north of Jerusalem, Josh. 9, 25. 26, **six hundred twenty and one.** V. 27. **The men of Michmas,** 1 Sam. 13, 25, **an hundred twenty and two.** V. 28. **The men of Bethel and Ai,** still farther north of Jerusalem, Josh. 7, 2, **two hundred twenty and three.** V. 29. **The children of Nebo,** the ancient Nob or Nobe, 1 Sam. 21, 2, **fifty and two.** V. 30. **The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six.** V. 31. **The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.** V. 32. **The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.** V. 33. **The children of Lod,** the later Lydda, **Hadid** (or Harid), **and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.** V. 34. **The children of Jericho,** in the lowlands of the Jordan toward the east, **three hundred forty and five.** V. 35. **The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.** It seems, from this list, that the cities in the neighborhood of Jerusalem were settled first and in the course of time more and more of them inhabited, as other exiles joined them and as their number increased.

THE PRIESTS, LEVITES, AND SERVANTS OF THE TEMPLE. — V. 36. **The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua,** the latter being the first high priest of the new community, a grandson of Seraiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had put to death at Riblah, 2 Kings 25, 18. 19, **nine hundred seventy and three.** V. 37. **The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.** V. 38. **The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.** V. 39. **The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.** This list shows

only four courses of priests, but these four were afterwards again increased to twenty-four, according to the division of David and with the names they originally bore, for we find a course of Abia mentioned in the New Testament, 1 Chron. 24, 10; Luke 1, 5. V. 40. **The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah** (or Hodevah, or Judah), **seventy and four.** V. 41. **The singers: the children of Asaph,** the only company that accompanied the first company of returning exiles, **an hundred twenty and eight.** V. 42. **The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, in all an hundred thirty and nine.** V. 43. **The Nethinim,** the descendants of foreign nations, who performed the meaner tasks about the Temple, 1 Chron. 9, 2: **the children of Ziha, the children of Hazupha, the children of Tabbaoth,** v. 44. **the children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon,** v. 45. **the children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,** v. 46. **the children of Hagab, the children of Shalmai, the children of Hanan,** v. 47. **the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah,** v. 48. **the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,** v. 49. **the children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai,** v. 50. **the children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim,** v. 51. **the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,** v. 52. **the children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,** v. 53. **the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah,** v. 54. **the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.** V. 55. **The children of Solomon's servants,** usually connected with the Nethinim, apparently descendants of prisoners of war that were not Canaanites: **the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda,** v. 56. **the children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,** v. 57. **the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami** (or Amon). V. 58. **All the Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants were three hundred ninety and two.** All these people, whose fathers had not originally been members of Israel, now clung to the true God with faithful loyalty. It is not the derivation, the human descent and family, that counts with the Lord, but the faith of the heart and true loyalty in one's entire life.

The People and the Priests without Genealogy. — V. 59. **And these were they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer,** probably all cities in a province of Babylonia; **but they could not show their father's house,** their genealogical tables had been lost, and they could not say to which father-house in Israel their forefathers had belonged, **and their seed,** their pedigree, their descent, **whether they were of Israel:** v. 60. **the children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.** They were not mere adventurers, but had been urged to join the company of returning exiles by their loyalty to Jehovah, even though their family records were lost. V. 61. **And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called after their name,** 2 Sam. 17, 27. It is supposed that this man of priestly descent married the woman because she was an heiress and assumed her name. In this way his connection with the tribe of Levites was lost sight of. Worldly ambition forfeited the dignity of the priesthood. V. 62. **These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found,** they were unable to bring the documentary proof of their priestly descent; **therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood,** they were excluded from the holy office because their descent was doubtful. V. 63. **And the Tirshatha,** the governor of the province, **said unto them that they should not eat of the most holy things till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim,** Ex. 28, 30; Num. 27, 21, that is, a high priest sanctioned by God to give decisions by consulting the Lord in the ancient manner, in infallible revelations. Because the matter was in doubt, this was a decision of discretion. V. 64. **The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.** This number is twelve thousand greater than the sum of the numbers, for to the returning exiles must be added the few remaining Jews and even such from Egypt as promptly gathered when they found that the ancient worship would be restored. It was a small flock that came together in Jerusalem and vicinity, but it represented the true worship of Jehovah in those days, the visible Church of God.

The Possessions and the Contributions of the Returned Exiles. — V. 65. **Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven. And there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women,** professional singers and musicians, who were employed upon various occasions. V. 66. **Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;** v. 67. **their camels, four hundred thirty and five; their asses, six thousand seven hundred and**

twenty. V. 68. **And some of the chief of the fathers, such of the heads as could afford it, when they came to the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem,** to the site where its ruins were then lying, **offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place,** voluntary contributions to rebuild the Temple. V. 69. **They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold,** that is, Persian darics, **and five thousand pounds of silver** (almost $400,000 all told), **and one hundred priests' garments.** V. 70. **So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim dwelt in their cities,** those assigned to them, **and all Israel in their cities.** Those who love the worship of the Lord will be found willing, also to-day, to sacrifice of their money and goods to the Lord. And such willing sacrifices and gifts are well-pleasing to God.

CHAPTER 3.

The Restoration of the Jewish Church.

THE WORSHIP RESUMED. — V. 1. **And when the seventh month was come,** namely, that of the church-year, in which the new year of the civil year, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles were celebrated, **and the children of Israel were in the cities,** when they had just about gotten settled in the homes assigned to them, the people, filled with zeal for the ancient worship, **gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem,** all inspired with the same idea and purpose. V. 2. **Then stood up Jeshua** (or Joshua), **the son of Jozadak, and his brethren, the priests, and Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,** the governor of the province, **and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel,** the immediate and most urgent necessity in the restoration of the ancient worship, **to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the Law of Moses, the man of God,** Deut. 12, 5. 6. V. 3. **And they set the altar upon his bases,** erecting it upon its old foundations as quickly as possible; **for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries,** those of the neighboring countries, especially also in what was known as Samaria, where the heathen element was strong, who might even now venture a hostile interruption. **And they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening,** Num. 28, 3. 4. V. 4. **They kept also the Feast of Tabernacles,** whose celebration began on the fifteenth of the month, **as it is written,** Ex. 23, 16, **and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom,** Num. 29, 12—40, **as the duty of every day required,** for the number of sacrifices prescribed for the various days of the festival was not the same; v. 5. **and afterward offered the continual burnt offering,** Ex. 29, 38—42, the one lamb of the morning and of the evening worship, **both of the new moons and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated,** Num. 28 and 29, **and of every one that willingly offered a free-will offering unto the Lord,** these words including all other sacrifices, also those of vows. V. 6. **From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord,** with the new moon of the civil year. **But the foundation of the Temple of the Lord was not yet laid,** the courts may have been free of the *débris* and ruins, but the Sanctuary had not yet been begun. V. 7. **They gave money also unto the masons and to the carpenters,** the workmen who prepared the hewed stones and the timber for the building; **and meat and drink and oil unto them of Zidon and to them of Tyre to bring cedar-trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa,** floating down the logs from some Phenician port to Joppa, whence they could be hauled to Jerusalem, **according to the grant that they had of Cyrus, king of Persia,** with whose special permission they were rebuilding the Temple, chap. 1, 3. That is the greatest necessity of any congregation, also in the New Testament, to assemble for the worship of the Lord, to hear and learn His Word.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE LAID. — V. 8. **Now, in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month,** about in April or the beginning of May, **began Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,** by whom he had been brought up, cp. 1 Chron. 3, 17—19, **and Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren, the priests and the Levites,** as many as lived in or near Jerusalem, **and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem, and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the Lord,** to act as overseers and to expedite the work. V. 9. **Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah** (or Hodaviah), **together,** all agreed on a plan of action, working in perfect harmony, **to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brethren, the Levites.** So the work, under the joint superintendence of all the Levites, moved forward systematically and efficiently. V. 10. **And when the builders laid the foundation of the Temple of the Lord,** when the formal celebration of the lay-

ing of the corner-stone or of the completion of the foundation was held, **they set the priests in their apparel**, in the garments of their office, **with trumpets**, the musical instruments used by the priests exclusively, **and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals**, 1 Chron. 13, 8; 15, 16. 19, **to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David, king of Israel.** V. 11. **And they sang together by course**, in antiphonal chorus chanting, **in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever toward Israel**, a section taken from one of the psalms of praise, as Ps. 106, 107, 118, or 136. **And all the people**, carried away with enthusiastic joy, **shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid**, so much at least was accomplished toward the erection of this new Temple. V. 12. **But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men**, of very great age, **that had seen the first house**, even if only in their early youth, **when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes**, when they estimated its dimensions and the size of the new Temple from the work done so far, **wept with a loud voice**, because it was evident to them that the size and the beauty of the new building would not reach that of Solomon's Temple, not to speak of the loss of the ark and of many other costly treasures which could not be replaced; **and many shouted aloud for joy**, v. 13. **so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.** The wailing howls of those carried away with grief was not easily distinguishable from the joyful acclamations of those who were filled with joy, so that only a great clamor was heard. Such was the celebration at the completion of the foundation of the second Temple. The little flock of believers certainly had reason for praising the Lord for all His goodness as they had experienced it.

CHAPTER 4.

Opposition of the Enemies.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE HINDERED. — V. 1. **Now, when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin**, the mixed population to the north of Judah, the Samaritans, who had mingled the Assyrian religion and customs with a remnant of the knowledge of Jehovah, besides continuing in their opposition to the members of the southern kingdom, **heard that the children of the captivity**, the returned exiles, **builded the Temple unto the Lord God of Israel**, v. 2. **then they came to Zerubbabel**, the governor of the province, **and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither.** Cp. 2 Kings 17, 24. The territory of the northern kingdom had been colonized by people brought up from Babylon, Cutha, and other Eastern countries, and they had been given a priest of Israel. They knew of the true God, but many of them also worshiped idols and clung to various heathen superstitions, all of which neutralized any worship of Jehovah which they may have believed they were rendering Him. V. 3. **But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God**, the strange mixture of religions which the Samaritans held was not a worship of the true God, nor did they accept a large part of divine revelation, the writings of the prophets; **but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us.** This was a proper reproof of unionistic practises, which might well be taken as a model in our days, when the spirit of unionism is in the air and coalitions and federations are effected without true unity of spirit. V. 4. **Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah**, they tried to put obstructions of every kind in their way, not only by molesting the workmen, but also by eventually obtaining an injunction against the continuation of the work, **and troubled them in building**, v. 5. **and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose**, in order to set aside the edict which gave the Jews permission to build the Temple, **all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius (Hystaspes), king of Persia.** For some sixteen years, by the use of various legal tricks, they actually succeeded in delaying the construction of the Sanctuary. And even in later years, as the author here summarizes, after the Temple had been erected, they persisted in their efforts to prejudice the Persian rulers against the Jews. V. 6. **And in the reign of Ahasuerus**, known in secular history as Xerxes, the successor to Darius, who was favorably disposed to the Jews, as the next chapters show, **in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.** V. 7. **And in the days of Artaxerxes**, commonly known as Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned from 465 to 424 B. C., **wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions**, evidently all of them Sa-

maritans, **unto Artaxerxes, king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue and interpreted in the Syrian tongue,** that is, both the writing and the language were Aramaic. Even at this late day they did not give up their hostility, but made another attempt to prevent the growth of Jerusalem and the building of its walls. V. 8. **Rehum, the chancellor, and Shimshai, the scribe,** apparently Persian officials in Samaria, **wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort.** V. 9. **Then wrote Rehum, the chancellor, and Shimshai, the scribe, and the rest of their companions,** the communities transplanted to Palestine from the Eastern countries, which are now named according to their original homes: **the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites,** v. 10. **and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper,** the official in charge of the colonizing of the northern territory, **brought over and set it in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river,** south and west of the river Euphrates, **and at such a time,** literally, "and so forth," an abbreviation including all other facts which were usually mentioned in the opening of a letter. That is the usual consequence when faithful Christians are opposed to unionism in every form — hostility on the part of the enemies and an attempt to hinder the spread of the Gospel.

THE LETTER TO ARTAXERXES. — V. 11. **This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king,** at least a summary of the contents, if not an exact copy. **Thy servants, the men on this side the river, and at such a time,** that is, "and so forth," all the compliments of the introduction being omitted. V. 12. **Be it known unto the king that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem,** they had been returning from Babylon for a matter of some seventy years then, and small companies were still coming in from the East, **building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof,** on which they were still building, **and joined the foundations,** they were still excavating and working to strengthen the foundations. V. 13. **Be it known now unto the king that, if this city be builded and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll,** the individual poll-tax, **tribute,** property-tax, **and custom,** all import and export duties, **and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings,** and so their action would finally prepare damage for the king. V. 14. **Now, because we have maintenance from the king's palace,** literally, "because with the salt of the palace we are salted," said of living on any one's bounty, **and it was not meet for to see the king's dishonor, therefore have we sent and certified the king,** making known to him the following facts, suggesting the following procedure, v. 15. **that search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers,** this duty being performed by the keeper of the royal archives; **so shalt thou find in the book of the records and know that this city is a rebellious city and hurtful unto kings and provinces,** whose inhabitants are addicted to uproar and rebellions, **and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time; for which cause was this city destroyed.** V. 16. **We certify the king that, if this city be builded again and the walls thereof set up,** all its defenses finished as in the days of its greatest power, **by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river,** the implication being that the Jews would cause the entire territory south and west of the Euphrates to declare and maintain its independence. V. 17. **Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum, the chancellor, and to Shimshai, the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria,** all the communities of colonists, **and unto the rest beyond the river, Peace,** and at such a time, the usual complimentary remarks at the opening of a letter being omitted. V. 18. **The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.** V. 19. **And I commanded,** by issuing a decree or edict, **and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection,** rising up in haughty rebellion, **against kings and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein.** V. 20. **There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river,** this being true of David and Solomon; **and toll, tribute, and custom was paid unto them,** all the surrounding countries being tributary to their kingdom at that time. V. 21. **Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me.** V. 22. **Take heed now that ye fail not to do this. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?** They should make no mistake in averting this damage, since it might so easily grow to be a pest. V. 23. **Now, when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai, the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews and made them to cease by force and power,** evidently using even troops to enforce their demand. This excursus, showing to what extent the hostility of the Samaritans went and how long it lasted, was inserted for the sake of completeness in characterizing them. The author now returns to his history of the building of the

Temple, the last verse of the chapter connecting with v. 5 above. V. 24. **Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem.** The foundation had been laid and the altar of burnt offering erected in its former place, but no more work was done. **So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia,** 520 B. C. The false church is ever the enemy of the true Church and is continually striving to deprive it of its rights and liberties, in order to hinder the spread of the Gospel.

CHAPTER 5.

The Building of the Temple Resumed.

The Zeal of the People Aroused. — V. 1. **Then the prophets, Haggai, the prophet, and Zechariah, the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.** It seems that the Jews, after their first attempt to rebuild the Temple had been hindered, had lost most of their interest and zeal for the task, and needed an emphatic admonition to arouse them to action again, Hag. 1, 2—11. V. 2. **Then rose up Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,** the governor of the returned exiles in Judah, **and Jeshua, the son of Jozadak,** the high priest, **and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and with them,** encouraging and inspiring them, **were the prophets of God, helping them.** V. 3. **At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river,** satrap, or viceroy, of the Persian king who governed the larger province, or satrapy, west of the Euphrates, including Syria, Palestine, Phenicia, and Cyprus, under whose jurisdiction were the smaller governors of the nations and tribes in his entire territory, **and Shethar-boznai and their companions,** minor officials accompanying the viceroy and his secretary, **and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house and to make up this wall?** The Samaritans had evidently complained also to the viceroy, and so he came to investigate the matter, not being content with hearing only one side of the matter. V. 4. **Then said we,** the Persian officials being meant, **unto them,** the Jews, **after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?** They inquired for the men in authority among the Jews, those upon whom the responsibility rested. V. 5. **But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews,** who might naturally have been overawed by the coming of these high officials and been inclined to give up their project in sheer terror, **that they could not cause them to cease till the matter came to Darius,** the Jews were permitted to go on with their work until the king himself had handed down a decision in the matter; **and then they,** the investigators, **returned answer by letter concerning this matter.** Because the Jews had informed Tatnai that they were acting by permission and upon a decree issued by Cyrus himself, the viceroy thought best to refer the case to the king for adjustment. God Himself holds His sheltering hand over the work done in His honor, and therefore it can never fail.

The Letter of Inquiry Directed to Darius. V. 6. **The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river,** on the western side of the Euphrates, **and Shethar-boznai and his companions, the Apharsachites,** the lower officials, **which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king;** v. 7. **they sent a letter unto him,** they made a report of their investigation as carried on till then, **wherein was written thus: Unto Darius the king, all peace!** V. 8. **Be it known unto the king that we went into the province of Judea,** the smaller subdivision of Tatnai's satrapy, **to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones,** literally, "with stones of rolling," since they were so large that they had to be rolled or dragged along the ground, **and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on and prospereth in their hands,** the Jews were making fine headway in the construction of their Temple. V. 9. **Then asked we those elders and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house and to make up these walls?** Cp. v. 4. V. 10. **We asked their names also to certify thee,** to give all the information which the king might desire, **that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them.** V. 11. **And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth,** the one whom they considered not only the highest, but the only true God, **and build the house that was builded these many years ago,** rebuilding the Temple of Solomon, **which a great king of Israel builded and set up,** 1 Kings 6, 1. V. 12. **But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath,** as it is so abundantly shown in the Books of the Kings and of Chronicles, 2 Chron. 36, 16. 17, **he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried the people away into Babylon,** 2 Kings 24, 2; 25, 8—11. V. 13. **But in the first year of Cyrus, the king of Babylon, the same King Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God,** chap. 1, 1.

V. 14. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the Temple that was in Jerusalem and brought them into the Temple of Babylon, 2 Chron. 36, 7. 18, those did Cyrus the king take out of the Temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor, rather, deputy; v. 15. and said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the Temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. So the fact that Cyrus himself had expressly ordered the building of the Temple was strongly brought out. **V. 16. Then came the same Sheshbazzar and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished.** Tatnai probably included this in his report from the appearance of things in Jerusalem, since the Temple area had been in use all these years, even though actual building operations had ceased. **V. 17. Now, therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure-house, which is there at Babylon, for the royal archives,** where important state documents were kept, were a part of this treasure-house, **whether it be so that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter,** render his opinion or decision. The mighty God of heaven and earth has also the powerful ones of the earth in His hand, guiding their hearts as the rivers of water and causing them to grant such liberties to the Church that it may continue its work of spreading the Gospel throughout the world.

CHAPTER 6.

Completion and Dedication of the Temple.

THE FAVORABLE DECREE OF DARIUS. — **V. 1. Then Darius the king made a decree,** he issued an edict or command for this special occasion, **and search was made in the house of the rolls,** in the royal archives, **where the treasures were laid up in Babylon,** where all official records and state papers were kept. **V. 2. And there was found at Achmetha,** the ancient capital of Northern Media and a favorite place of residence with Cyrus, **in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll,** apparently one of parchment, which the ancient Persians seem to have used, though it is certain that the Assyrians used tablets and cylinders of baked clay, **and therein was a record thus written: v. 3. In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they,** the Jews, **offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid,** capable of supporting the great and heavy structure resting upon them; **the height thereof threescore cubits and the breadth thereof threescore cubits,** the measurements being given in a general manner to conform to those of Solomon's Temple, **v. 4. with three rows of great stones, the two side-walls and the rear wall being laid up in hewn stones, and a row of new timber,** of which the front wall was constructed; **and let the expenses be given out of the king's house,** from the royal revenues of the Persian empire, in the territory west of the Euphrates; **v. 5. and also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the Temple which is at Jerusalem and brought unto Babylon, 2 Chron. 36, 7. 18, be restored, and brought again unto the Temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God.** This was the edict of Cyrus as found in the records. To this Darius added his own comments and commands. **V. 6. Now, therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river,** satrap of the entire territory extending from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea, **Shethar-boznai, and your companions, the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence,** they should in no way interfere with the building of the Temple nor lay any hindrances in the way of the Jews; **v. 7. let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews,** Zerubbabel, who had been designated deputy for the province of Judea alone, chap. 1, 8, **and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. V. 8. Moreover, I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river,** of the revenue in taxes and other duties in the entire satrapy under the jurisdiction of Tatnai, **forthwith expenses be given unto these men that they be not hindered,** the special payments out of the king's treasury were not to be discontinued until the work had been completed. **V. 9. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks and rams and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil,** various animals and materials being mentioned without exhausting the list, **according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail, v. 10. that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savors unto the**

God of heaven, well-pleasing to Him, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons. This was said, not merely out of deference to, and admiration of, Cyrus, who was the father-in-law of Darius, but in recognition of the true God, the Lord of heaven, with whom Darius had become acquainted through the work of Daniel. V. 11. Also I have made a decree, hereby proclaimed, that whosoever shall alter this word, by setting aside the command it contained, let timber be pulled down from his house, some great rafter or beam, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon, either by being impaled or by being crucified; and let his house be made a dunghill for this, torn down and changed into a public sewer, for an everlasting disgrace upon his name. V. 12. And the God that hath caused His name to dwell there destroy all kings and people that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem, the Temple should be inviolate forever. I, Darius, have made a decree; let it be done with speed. So the formal and solemn edict went forth which protected the Jews in the building of their Temple. God has His servants also among the kings and the mighty ones of the earth, who obey Him and further the cause of His kingdom.

THE SECOND TEMPLE DEDICATED. — V. 13. Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, the officials assisting them, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. V. 14. And the elders of the Jews builded, they continued work on the Temple, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai, the prophet, and Zechariah, the son of Iddo. Not only did these two prophets awaken a proper enthusiasm in the people, but the Lord laid His signal blessing upon the undertaking, so that it progressed without hindrances. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, as still recorded in the first chapter of Haggai, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, king of Persia, this successor of Darius being mentioned on account of the gifts which he caused to be brought to Jerusalem by Ezra, chap. 7, 15. 19. V. 15. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. According to one careful investigator the foundation had been completed in April, 536 B. C., and the entire building was finished on February 21, 515 B. C. V. 16. And the children of Israel, the entire congregation of the returned exiles, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, even as they had celebrated the completion of the foundation, v. 17. and offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, these being burnt offerings, and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, as at the dedication of the Tabernacle, the present congregation rightly considering itself the representative of the entire ancient people of Israel. V. 18. And they set the priests in their divisions, as David had arranged for, 1 Chron. 24, 1, and the Levites in their courses, 1 Chron. 23, 6, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem, every division being entrusted with a special part of the work pertaining to the service of the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses, Num. 3, 6; 8, 14, the entire worship thus being once more instituted and ordered in accordance with the Law and ancient usage. V. 19. And the children of the captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month, very shortly after the dedication of the Temple, which may have taken place before the end of the previous month, at the end of the church-year, as soon as the Temple was finished. V. 20. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, having taken care to perform the rites of consecration, Ex. 19, 10, and to be cleansed from all Levitical defilement, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, for it gradually became the custom for the Levites to do the slaughtering of all the Passover lambs, since it was so easy for defilement to rest upon the average person in the congregation, and for their brethren, the priests, who were busy at the altar of burnt offering, and for themselves. V. 21. And the children of Israel which were come again out of captivity and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, not only by renouncing idolatry, but also by being formally received into the congregation by the usual rites of washings and by circumcision, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat, v. 22. and kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for this festival was merely a continuation of the Passover Feast; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria, of the Chaldean king, unto them to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. They were enjoying peace and prosperity and were duly grateful to the Lord, the Giver of all good gifts, for His rich blessings. It is ever a source of joy for the children of God to be privileged to sacrifice prayer and thanksgiving to God, this attitude of mind being further stimulated when they see that God establishes the work of their hands, that the building of His kingdom is carried on successfully.

CHAPTER 7.

The Return of Ezra.

THE JOURNEY OF EZRA AND HIS COMPANY. — V. 1. **Now, after these things,** almost sixty years after the events last related, **in the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia,** the Artaxerxes Longimanus of secular history, **Ezra, the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,** v. 2. **the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub,** v. 3. **the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,** v. 4. **the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki,** v. 5. **the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the chief priest,** Ezra himself being very careful to note his priestly descent, although he does not give every link in the genealogical chain, v. 6. **this Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the Law of Moses,** a learned rabbi, or doctor, in the Mosaic Law and its interpretation, **which the Lord God of Israel had given. And the king granted him all his request,** entrusting him, at his own suggestion, with an important commission to the Jews, **according to the hand of the Lord, his God, upon him.** It was due to the goodness, providence, and grace of God which ruled over him that Ezra was granted this favor by the king. V. 7. **And there went up,** subsequently, **some of the children of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim,** the lower servants of the Temple, to whom the more menial tasks were entrusted, **unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.** V. 8. **And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month,** after a journey of four months, **which was in the seventh year of the king.** V. 9. **For upon the first day of the first month,** the new moon of the ecclesiastical year, **began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him,** who directed also this affair to the blessing of all His children concerned. V. 10. **For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord,** in studying the Law of God, its principles, institutions, privileges, and requirements, **and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments,** the knowledge of which, at this time, had been considerably reduced, so far as the people as a whole were concerned. Where God is served with serious devotion, where his Word and worship are upheld with all zeal, there others are gained for the Lord. The more strictly the Church will follow the precepts of the Word of God, also in uncompromising opposition to all unionism, the better will it be able to do mission-work.

THE LETTER OF ARTAXERXES. — V. 11. **Now, this is the copy of the letter that the King Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra, the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord and of His statutes to Israel,** learned not only in the general Moral Law as it pertained to all men, but also in those particular precepts which concerned the children of Israel alone during the time of preparation in the Old Testament. V. 12. **Artaxerxes, king of kings,** a title assumed with the usual Oriental vanity, **unto Ezra, the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven,** a most learned doctor, **perfect peace, and at such a time,** that is, and so forth, the customary complimentary remarks of the introduction being omitted. V. 13. **I make a decree that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites in my realm, which are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.** Just what brought about this favorable attitude of the king is not noted. Some scholars ascribe it to the influence of Esther, who may, at just about this time, have become queen; others think that Ezra or other leading Jews themselves suggested to Artaxerxes the need of a commission to study the situation in Judea at first hand. V. 14. **Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counselors,** the supreme tribunals of the Persian kings, **to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem,** to investigate the situation thoroughly and from every angle, **according to the Law of thy God which is in thine hand,** of which Ezra had made such a thorough study that he was familiar with all its provisions, v. 15. **and to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem,** chap. 8, 25, v. 16. **and all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon,** in the form of free-will offerings on the part of the inhabitants, **with the free-will offering of the people,** that is, of the Jews still living there, **and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem,** so far as they would contribute voluntarily, v. 17. **that thou mayest buy speedily with this money,** namely, in view of the fact that his mission was approved by the king in order to encourage the Jewish congregation and their worship, **bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat-offerings,** such as were prepared from the finest flour, Num. 15, 4—13, **and their drink-offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem.** It seems that the sacrificial worship needed to be stimulated anew after the death of the old leaders, who had brought up the first company of returning exiles to Jerusalem. V. 18. **And whatsoever shall**

seem good to thee and to thy brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, whatever the situation might seem to demand, **that do after the will of your God.** Ezra was given free hand to act, to institute such measures as he thought best for the interest of the Jewish religion in Judea. V. 19. **The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God,** apparently such as were intended to replace those that were worn out, **those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.** V. 20. **And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God,** in making needed improvements, **which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure-house,** the royal local treasury, where all the taxes from the entire satrapy were collected before being sent to the Persian capital. V. 21. **And I, even I, Artaxerxes, the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river,** those in the larger satrapy, to which the province of Judea belonged, **that whatsoever Ezra, the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily,** v. 22. **unto an hundred talents of silver** (almost $200,000), **and to an hundred measures of wheat** (a cor, at that time, being estimated at nearly two or nearly six bushels), **and to an hundred baths of wine** (a bath being approximately five gallons, at that time), **and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much.** Within this limit Ezra had free rein to act as he saw fit and thought best, surely an almost unexampled kindness on the part of a heathen king. V. 23. **Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?** Artaxerxes believed that, by favoring the religion of the Jews in this manner, he would in turn gain the favor of their God and establish his empire more firmly. V. 24. **Also we certify you,** making it known to the treasurers of the king's taxes, **that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinim, or ministers of this house of God,** the servants who were even below the Nethinim, **it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom upon them,** they were exempt from all taxes. V. 25. **And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand,** in accordance with his understanding of the Lord's precepts and all the demands of the Jewish religious worship, **set magistrates and judges which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God,** all those who belonged to the Jewish Church; **and teach ye them that know them not,** those who professed to be members of the congregation and yet were unfamiliar with the fundamental laws of God. V. 26. **And whosoever will not do the Law of thy God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.** "Since the civil and social life of Israel was so closely connected with their religion by the Law, they could not well prosper under judges who had neither appreciation nor understanding of their religion." (Lange.) Thus the entire organization of the civil and social and religious life of the Jews was entrusted to Ezra by a royal decree, giving to the Jews practically the same rights and liberties which they had enjoyed under the ancient form of the direct theocracy. Ezra now adds a closing doxology in appreciation of the Lord's kindness in shaping events in favor of the Jews. V. 27. **Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem,** for this assistance aided materially in bringing greater glory to the Temple and in making people regard the Jewish religion with a higher regard, v. 28. **and hath extended mercy unto me before the king and his counselors** v. 14. **and before all the king's mighty princes.** Thus gratefully Ezra acknowledged the kindness and goodness of God. **And I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord, my God, was upon me,** for so he considered this fortunate turn of events, **and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me,** heads of households and perhaps also of father-houses, with whom their entire division would probably emigrate. Christians will at all times recognize the guiding and blessing hand of God in the affairs of their lives and will gratefully and publicly praise Him for His goodness.

CHAPTER 8.

Details of Ezra's Journey.

THE ASSEMBLING OF THE COMPANY. — V. 1. **These are now the chief of their fathers,** the oldest living heads or fathers of the descendants in one family, **and this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.** The register of families according to father-houses, under the leadership of Ezra, is now given. V. 2. **Of the sons of Phinehas: Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar: Daniel,** these being of priestly descent; **of the sons of David,** direct descendants of the great king: **Hattush.** V. 3. **Of the sons of Shech-**

aniah, of the sons of Pharosh: Zechariah; and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty. V. 4. Of the sons of Pahath-moab: Elihoenai, the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males. V. 5. Of the sons of Shechaniah: the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males. V. 6. Of the sons also of Adin: Ebed, the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males. V. 7. And of the sons of Elam: Jeshaiah, the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males. V. 8. And of the sons of Shephatiah: Zebadiah, the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males. V. 9. Of the sons of Joab, treated separately here, probably because only a small number of them had returned with Zerubbabel, chap. 2, 6: Obadiah, the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males. V. 10. And of the sons of Shelomith: the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males. V. 11. And of the sons of Bebai: Zechariah, the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males. V. 12. And of the sons of Azgad: Johanan, the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males. V. 13. And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these: Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males. V. 14. Of the sons also of Bigvai: Uthai and Zabbud (or Zaccur), and with them seventy males. The number of males enumerated in this list amounts to 1,754, so that the caravan, including women and children, may easily have been six thousand strong. V. 15. And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava, a place or region on one of the canals of Mesopotamia communicating with the Euphrates; and there abode we in tents three days, after the Oriental custom, which gave the leader of the caravan a chance to arrange it in proper order and to appoint his assistants. And I viewed the people and the priests and found there none of the sons of Levi, the ordinary Levites. V. 16. Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men, heads of little communities; also for Joiarib and for Elnathan, men of understanding, teachers among the people. V. 17. And I sent them, undoubtedly by virtue of the authority vested in him, with commandment unto Iddo, the chief at the place Casiphia, this being either the name of a place between Ahava and Babylon or the designation of an office, that of treasurer to the king, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, putting the very words of their commission into their mouths, and to his brethren, the Nethinim, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God. It seems evident from this statement that the Jews had kept their religious organization in Babylon at that time for more than a century, almost a hundred and fifty years, and had also enjoyed the privilege of free worship, even the Nethinim, who were beneath the Levites in the tasks of the Temple, having maintained their identity. V. 18. And by the good hand of our God upon us, by a special manifestation of His merciful kindness, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen; v. 19. and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty; v. 20. also of the Nethinim, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, to assist the Levites in the lower and more menial tasks of the Temple, two hundred and twenty Nethinim; all of them were expressed by name. It is a strange fact that even the freedom from taxes did not induce more men of the tribe of Levi to join the company of Ezra at once. The prosperity of this world often results in a reduced amout of zeal for the welfare of God's kingdom.

THE PRIESTS ENTRUSTED WITH THE LORD'S TREASURES. — V. 21. Then I proclaimed a fast there, in preparation for the journey, its purpose being to implore from God safety amidst the many and various dangers of the desert, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us and for our little ones and for all our substance, both safe and easy to travel, that they might not be forced to abandon the best route. V. 22. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, against the bands of Bedouins which infested the deserts and lived largely on robbery and plunder, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him, but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him. They had declared that they were traveling under the protection of the true God, and they did not want to lower the respect which Artaxerxes had for their religion at that time by applying for an armed escort. V. 23. So we fasted and besought our God for this; and He was intreated of us. He rewarded their faith in Him by permitting them to enjoy perfect safety during the entire journey. V. 24. Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, apparently twelve, each, of priests and of Levites, v. 25. and weighed unto them the silver and the gold and the vessels, even the offering of the house

of our God, which the king, and his counselors, and his lords, and all Israel there present had offered, chap. 7, 15. 16. V. 26. I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver and silver vessels an hundred talents and of gold an hundred talents; v. 27. also twenty basins of gold, covered cups for pouring out drink-offerings, of a thousand drams, literally, "darics," Persian money; and two vessels of fine copper, of excellent polish, precious as gold. The value of all these treasures has been estimated at about two and one half million dollars. V. 28. And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the Lord, set apart for the special service of Jehovah; the vessels are holy also, intended for use in divine worship only, set apart for this purpose; and the silver and the gold are a free-will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers, voluntarily contributed by both the Jews of Babylon and by their heathen neighbors, together with the king and his counselors. V. 29. Watch ye and keep them, as consecrated custodians, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites and chief of the fathers of Israel at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord, where all these treasures were to be delivered intact. V. 30. So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels to bring them to Jerusalem, unto the house of our God, they accepted the commission with the same solemnity with which it was tendered. V. 31. Then we departed from the river of Ahava, from the region on the Euphrates known by that name, on the twelfth day of the first month, some time having elapsed during which the Levites who were summoned joined the caravan, to go unto Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way, both the organized and the unorganized desert robbers. "To accomplish a journey so long and so arduous in perfect safety is one of the most astonishing events recorded in history. Nothing but the vigilant care of a superintending Providence could have brought them securely to their destination." 2) V. 32. And we came to Jerusalem, after a journey of about four months, and abode there three days, resting from the effects of their journey. V. 33. Now, on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the priest, apparently in charge of the Lord's treasures; and with him was Eleazar, the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad, the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah, the son of Binnui, Levites, all these witnesses being present to see that everything was done decently and in order; v. 34. by number and by weight of every one; and all the weight was written at that time, everything noted down carefully in an official document, so that the correct preservation might be confirmed. V. 35. Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, those who had returned in this caravan, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel: twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he-goats for a sin-offering. Cp. chap. 6, 17; Lev. 4. All this was a burnt offering unto the Lord. V. 36. And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants and to the governors on this side the river, both to the satraps, as civil officers, and to the chief military officers in the satrapy between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean; and they, these Persian magnates, furthered the people and the house of God, they brought their influence to bear in favor of the Jews. Even as the Jews of that time took care of the outward treasures of their worship, so the Christians must be the guardians of the spiritual treasures entrusted to them, the Gospel and the Sacraments.

2) Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, 293.

CHAPTER 9.

Ezra's Sorrowful Prayer.

The Evil of Intermarriages Exposed. — V. 1. Now, when these things were done, namely, the delivery of the treasures and the money, the bringing of the sacrifices, and the paying of respects to the official representatives of the Persian king in the satrapy of which Judea was a part, the princes, certain chief men among the people, came to me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, of the remnants of the Gentile nations that were still found in the land, doing according to their abominations, showing a tendency to relapse once more into gross idolatry, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites, whose idolatrous practises had persisted in the country during all these centuries. V. 2. For they, the Jews who had previously returned from Babylonia, have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed, the children of Israel as a peculiar people, as a nation

consecrated to Jehovah, **have mingled themselves with the people of those lands; yea, the hand of the princes and rulers,** of the leaders of the people, **hath been chief in this trespass,** which was a plain violation of the divine Law, Deut. 7, 2. 3. The mixed marriages threatened the purity of Israel and imperiled the higher blessings connected therewith. V. 3. **And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle,** both the inner dress and the outer cover, **and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard,** all signs of most overpowering grief and righteous anger, **and sat down astonied,** staring dully into nothingness, as one helpless in angry displeasure. V. 4. **Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel,** those impressed with the terror of Jehovah's possible wrath, **because of the transgression of those that had been carried away,** of those living in captivity, of the people who had returned with the first company of exiles; **and I sat astonied until the evening sacrifice.** Ezra foresaw the dangerous results of the condition as reported to him and was overwhelmed with the difficulty of correcting the evil. Mixed marriages are always dangerous, for experience has shown that the believing spouse is more often misled into misbelief and indifference than the unbelieving is brought to the knowledge of the truth.

EZRA'S CONFESSION OF THE PEOPLE'S SIN. — V. 5. **And at the evening sacrifice,** about the middle of the afternoon, **I arose up from my heaviness,** from the stupor which had benumbed him; **and having rent my garment and my mantle,** once more indicating his anger, sorrow, and grief, **I fell upon my knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord, my God,** in a gesture of humble supplication, v. 6. **and said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush,** a very emphatic expression of his repentant sorrow for his people, **to lift up my face to Thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens,** their great abundance being like a flood which threatened to engulf the Jews forever. V. 7. **Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day,** as the history of both Israel and Judah under the kingdom had shown; **and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to be killed outright, to captivity,** to languish in exile, **and to a spoil,** their land having been plundered time and again by the enemies, **and to confusion of face,** to the deepest shame and humiliation, **as it is this day.** V. 8. **And now for a little space,** for almost sixty years, **grace hath been showed from the Lord, our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His Holy Place,** the figure being that of a peg on which domestic utensils were hung and the meaning that God had again given them a part and a right in His house, in His Temple, **that our God may lighten our eyes,** by removing the night of trouble and weakness resting upon them, **and give us a little reviving in our bondage,** by bestowing salvation, strength, and encouragement. V. 9. **For we were bondmen,** held captive by the enemies; **yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving,** restoring them once more as a nation and as a congregation of Jehovah, **to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem,** by protecting them against all their oppressors. The mercies of God having been mentioned, the sin of the people stands out all the more strongly by comparison. V. 10. **And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Thy commandments** v. 11. **which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants, the prophets,** for their mixed marriages involved idolatry, **saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.** V. 12. **Now, therefore, give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons,** Ezra here quotes from Moses, Ex. 23, 32; 34, 16; Deut. 7, 3, **nor seek their peace or their wealth forever, that ye may be strong and eat the good of the land,** enjoy all its richest blessings, **and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever,** as a permanent possession of the children of Israel. V. 13. **And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great trespass,** the punishment of their exile, **seeing that Thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve,** literally, "hast restrained a part of our sins from below," namely, in this, that His punishment was below the measure of their misdeeds, **and hast given us such deliverance as this,** v. 14. **should we again break Thy commandments and join in affinity with the people of these abominations,** by entering into mixed marriages with them? The thought is that the remembrance of the leniency of the Lord in dealing with the people ought certainly to restrain them from transgressing His precept. **Wouldest not Thou be angry with us till Thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?** This fate the general blameworthiness of the people in the new transgression would certainly have deserved. V. 15.

O Lord God of Israel, Thou art righteous, a Judge whose holiness would constrain Him to bring punishment upon the congregation if its members would continue in the present transgression; **for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day. Behold, we are before Thee in our trespasses, for we cannot stand before Thee because of this.** The implication was that, unless, by the help of divine grace, they would repent and bring forth fruit meet for repentance in a prompt change of tactics, the wrath of the righteous God would be sure to strike them. A confession of this kind also includes the prayer for forgiveness and will therefore surely be heard.

CHAPTER 10.

The Adjustment of the Intermarriage Problem.

Ezra's Reform Measures Adopted. — V. 1. **Now, when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God,** for it was in the court of the Lord that he made his prayer, as shown in chapter 9, **there assembled unto him out of Israel,** out of those present for the evening sacrifice, **a very great congregation of men and women and children; for the people wept very sore,** they were plunged into great depths of grief over the evil circumstances into which so many had plunged themselves by contracting forbidden marriages. Ezra's passionate prayer, therefore, was a sensation which attracted people to the court of the Temple in increasing numbers. V. 2. **And Shechaniah, the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam,** evidently a man of some importance, **answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God,** acting unfaithfully and without loyalty, **and have taken strange wives of the people of the land;** for, though not himself guilty, he spoke in the general name of the people; **yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing,** a removal of the evil was still possible in his opinion. V. 3. **Now, therefore, let us make a covenant with our God,** by obligating themselves before God with a solemn vow, **to put away all the wives,** by an absolute divorce, **and such as are born of them,** the children of such mixed marriages, **according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God,** the will and the precepts of the Lord being interpreted by the spiritual leaders of the people; **and let it be done according to the Law,** rather, "it shall happen according to the Law," as explained by Ezra and his colleagues. V. 4. **Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee;** Ezra was the one man competent to take charge of the problem, both on account of his familiarity with the Law of God and on account of the authority vested in him by the king of Persia. **We also will be with thee,** to back him up in any plan proposed by him; **be of good courage and do it.** V. 5. **Then arose Ezra and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel to swear that they should do according to this word,** he obligated them by a solemn oath and thus stimulated their zeal. **And they sware.** V. 6. **Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God,** he left the place in the court where he had prayed, **and went into the chamber of Johanan, the son of Eliashib,** where he could meet the princes and elders of the Jews in private; **and when he came thither, he did eat no bread nor drink water,** keeping up an absolute fast as a sign of mourning, in order to impress all the others with the sincerity of his motives; **for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.** V. 7. **And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity,** both of the first and second band of returned exiles, **that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem,** v. 8. **and that, whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders,** who had immediately agreed to the proposition of Ezra, **all his substance should be forfeited,** devoted to God, confiscated for the use of the Temple, **and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away,** excluded from the Jewish Church by a sentence of excommunication. V. 9. **Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month,** on the twentieth day of the month, between the end of December and the first part of January, the coldest and most disagreeable season in Palestine; **and all the people sat in the street of the house of God,** out in the court and in the open square before the court, **trembling because of this matter,** excited and worried on account of the cause for which they had been summoned, **and for the great rain,** which at that season falls in torrents. V. 10. **And Ezra, the priest, stood up and said unto them, Ye have transgressed and have taken strange wives,** dwelling with them in a wedlock which did not meet with the approval of the Lord, **to increase the trespass of Israel,** for the entire congregation would be held responsible for this evil. V. 11. **Now, therefore, make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers,** acknowledging their wrong, **and do His pleasure,** in bringing forth fruits meet for repentance; **and separate your-**

selves from the people of the land and from the strange wives. It was a radical measure, but one which would prove immediately effective in cleansing Israel from defilement. V. 12. **Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice,** their resolution firmly and unhesitatingly expressed, **As thou hast said, so must we do,** feeling themselves in conscience bound to be obedient. V. 13. **But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without,** the season being too disagreeable, **neither is this a work of one day or two,** and therefore to be disposed of while they waited; **for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.** V. 14. **Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand,** as a commission to adjust the entire affair, **and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times,** they were to be notified on what days they should come, **and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof,** as witnesses and assistant judges, to investigate each case thoroughly, **until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us;** with the cause of the wrath removed, the Lord's wrath itself would cease. V. 15. **Only Jonathan, the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah, the son of Tikvah, were employed about this matter,** literally, "stood against this thing," they withstood the proposed resolution; **and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them,** all four desiring to continue the custom of intermarriages. V. 16. **And the children of the captivity did so,** they acted according to their proposal. **And Ezra, the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers,** heads of father-houses, **and all of them by their names, were separated,** as a commission to handle this matter, **and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter,** they held a session to take up the cases. V. 17. **And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.** The sessions thus lasted, in all, very nearly three months. Any Christian congregation which finds that evils have crept into its midst is in duty bound to investigate the matter and to remove all offenses.

CATALOG OF MEN WHO HAD TAKEN STRANGE WIVES. — V. 18. **And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives; namely, of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brethren: Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.** V. 19. **And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives,** pledging themselves most solemnly by giving their right hand; **and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.** Cp. Lev. 5, 14. 15. V. 20. **And of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.** V. 21. **And of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah.** V. 22. **And of the sons of Pashur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.** V. 23. **Also of the Levites: Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same is Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.** V. 24. **Of the singers also: Eliashib; and of the porters: Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.** V. 25. **Moreover, of Israel, of the lay-members of the congregation: of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.** V. 26. **And of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.** V. 27. **And of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.** V. 28. **Of the sons also of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.** V. 29. **And of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.** V. 30. **And of the sons of Pahathmoab: Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.** V. 31. **And of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,** v. 32. **Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.** V. 33. **Of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.** V. 34. **Of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, and Uel,** v. 35. **Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,** v. 36. **Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,** v. 37. **Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,** v. 38. **and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,** v. 39. **and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,** v. 40. **Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,** v. 41. **Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,** v. 42. **Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.** V. 43. **Of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.** V. 44. **All these had taken strange wives; and some of them had wives by whom they had children,** a fact which, of course, increased the difficulties of Ezra's task. All those who have sinned openly ought to acknowledge their transgression in the same manner and put away the offense. Every Christian congregation should be zealous about the honor of God and the welfare of all the souls in its midst.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

INTRODUCTION

Fourteen years after Ezra, the learned doctor of the Law, had instituted his reforms of worship in Jerusalem, another prominent man came to the capital of Judea from the land of the exile, namely, Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, the author of this last book of the Old Testament canon. He had held the important office of cupbearer to King Artaxerxes Longimanus when he received information from Judea which caused him to apply for leave of absence, in order to remedy, if possible, the unfortunate conditions then obtaining in the land of his fathers. For fourteen years he held the position of Governor of Judah, during which time he introduced many reforms among the people, abolished usury, revived the knowledge of the Law, restored the strict observance of the Sabbath, enforced the payment of religious dues, and compelled those who had married foreign, idolatrous wives to divorce them.

The Book of Nehemiah is plainly divided into three parts. In chapters 1 to 7 Nehemiah states the occasion for his journey and his work in building the walls and gates of the Holy City. In chapters 8 to 10 he tells of the solemn restoration of divine worship, for which he worked together with Ezra. In chapters 11 to 13 we have lists of various kinds and a few statements concerning the last deeds of Nehemiah, including his reforms of sundry abuses. The book was probably written between 433 and 431, at Jerusalem.[1])

1) Cp. Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 40. 41; *Concordia Bible Class*, April, 1919, 50. 51.

CHAPTER 1.

Nehemiah's Grief over Jerusalem.

V. 1. **The words of Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah,** this designation distinguishing him from others of the same name, chap. 3, 16; 7, 7. **And it came to pass in the month Chisleu,** the ninth month of the Jewish church-year, **in the twentieth year,** namely, that of King Artaxerxes of Persia, the year 445 B. C., **as I was in Shushan, the palace,** one of the cities of the royal residence between the Eulaeus and Shapur rivers, in what was known as Elam, v. 2. **that Hanani, one of my brethren,** a real full brother of Nehemiah, chap. 7, 2, **came, he and certain men of Judah,** for there was always some communication between the Jews living in the East and those in Palestine; **and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity,** literally, "the deliverance, who were left over out of the exile," who were now, in a measure at least, enjoying the rights of a nation, **and concerning Jerusalem.** V. 3. **And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province,** in Judea, some ninety years after the exile, **are in great affliction and reproach,** in adversity on account of the scornful treatment of the neighboring peoples; **the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.** Zerubbabel and Ezra had been empowered to rebuild the Temple and to repair the dwellings of the city, but beyond this their jurisdiction had not extended; the ruined condition was still apparent on all sides. V. 4. **And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, withdrawing from his duties at court and giving vent, in his retirement, to the most overwhelming sorrow, and prayed before the God of heaven,** v. 5. **and said, I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God,** awe-inspiring, before whom men tremble, **that keepeth covenant and mercy,** the merciful covenant to which the Jewish economy was looking forward in the Messiah, **for them that love Him and observe His commandments:** v. 6. **let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open,** in an attitude of most careful attention, **that Thou mayest hear the prayer of Thy servant which I pray before Thee now, day and night,** cp. 1 Kings 8, 29. 52, **for the children of Israel, Thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against Thee,** for the entire congregation bears the responsibility of the individual's sins, unless these are reproved in the proper manner; **both I and my father's house have sinned.** It is only by a full and free acknowledgment of sinfulness that men can gain the ear of the Lord. V. 7. **We have dealt very corruptly against Thee and have not kept the commandments nor the statutes nor the judgments which Thou commandedst Thy servant Moses,** both the precepts of the covenant and the obligations toward mankind in general had often been neglected. V. 8. **Remember, I beseech Thee, the word that Thou commandedst Thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations,** Lev. 26, 33; Deut. 28, 64; v. 9. **but if ye turn unto Me,** in true repent-

ance and change of heart, **and keep My commandments and do them, though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven,** in every part of the great and wide world, **yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set My name there,** Deut. 4, 25—31. V. 10. **Now, these are Thy servants and Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy great power and by Thy strong hand,** from the bondage of Egypt as well as from the enmity of many other oppressors. V. 11. **O Lord, I beseech Thee, let now Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant,** Nehemiah alone, **and to the prayer of Thy servants,** the believing Jews, **who desire to fear Thy name,** for God's being is expressed in His Word and work, according to which He is named; **and prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day and grant him mercy in the sight of this man,** namely, King Artaxerxes; for Nehemiah had made up his mind to ask for leave of absence, and he wanted God to make the king favorably disposed to this petition. **For I was the king's cupbearer,** an office of great importance at Oriental courts, giving to the incumbent considerable influence, since he was also a counselor of the king. Even as Nehemiah prayed to the Lord in this instance, thus all true believers cry to Him at all times, praying that God would forgive the sins of His children, who are redeemed through the blood of His Son, accept them in His mercy, and strengthen and increase them for their work in His kingdom.

CHAPTER 2.

Nehemiah Sent to Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH'S REQUEST GRANTED BY THE KING. — V. 1. **And it came to pass in the month Nisan,** the first month of the Jewish church-year, some four months after Nehemiah had received news regarding the pitiful conditions in Jerusalem, **in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king,** the years of whose reign were counted from some other month than Nisan, namely, by Persian reckoning, **that wine was before him,** it being the custom to drink a little wine with some dried fruits before dinner; **and I took up the wine and gave it unto the king,** serving it as his office required. **Now, I had not been beforetime sad in his presence,** it being poor policy at Oriental courts not to show a satisfied and happy face. V. 2. **Wherefore the king,** noting at once that something unusual had happened to sadden his trusted servant, **said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick** This is nothing else but sorrow of heart. It was true then as it is now: "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken," Prov. 15, 13. **Then I was very sore afraid** v. 3. **and said unto the king, Let the king live forever!** the common formula of address to the king. **Why should not my countenance be sad when the city, the place of my father's sepulchers,** for Nehemiah seems to have been a descendant of the royal house of David, **lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?** This explained the dejected air which Nehemiah wore even in the presence of the king. V. 4. **Then the king said unto me,** rightly guessing that Nehemiah had a request to make in connection with this sad state of affairs, **For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven,** sending up a silent prayer for strength and assistance. V. 5. **And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my father's sepulchers,** literally, "the city of the graves of my fathers," probably intended in a double sense, **that I may build it.** V. 6. **And the king said unto me,** (**the queen,** as some think, Esther, **also sitting by him,** this being a private occasion, at which the principal wife of the monarch could be present,) **For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.** This circumstance proves that Nehemiah enjoyed the favor and confidence of the Persian monarch in an unusual degree, since he himself fixed the length of his commission. V. 7. **Moreover, I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river,** to the great territory between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea, **that they may convey me over,** under the protection of a military guard, **till I come into Judah;** v. 8. **and a letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house,** the royal palace of Solomon, which lay in ruins, **and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into,** the Temple itself, which he would, of course, visit and inspect. So the materials for the building of all these structures were to be furnished from the timber of the royal park somewhere in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. **And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.** All believers who are honestly concerned for the welfare of the Church will receive what they desire and work for. God Himself is zealous for His people, for His Church, and hears the prayers of His faithful children in its behalf.

Nehemiah Arrives at Jerusalem. — V. 9. **Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now, the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me,** not only on account of his rank as cupbearer of the king, but also as deputy governor of Judea, which he was on this trip. V. 10. **When Sanballat the Horonite,** apparently a Moabite, **and Tobiah, the servant, the Ammonite,** a freedman raised to some official dignity, assistant to the former, who seems to have been governor of Samaria, **heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel,** who were just then in a bad way, a fact which gave the Samaritans the upper hand. V. 11. **So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days,** resting and casting up in his mind just how he might undertake the work of reconstruction, for there was need of it everywhere. V. 12. **And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me,** just a few trusted attendants; **neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem,** both the general plans and the special action that he had determined upon during the three days of his visit; **neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.** The survey of the ruined walls was to be made in all secrecy, lest the enemies, who had relatives in the city, might find out about it. V. 13. **And I went out by night by the Gate of the Valley,** most likely that of Hinnom toward the southeast, even before the Dragon Well, a fountain or pool on the opposite side of the valley, **and to the Dung Port,** the gate where the rubbish of the city was cast out and burned, **and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, lying in ruins, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.** V. 14. **Then I went on to the Gate of the Fountain,** in front of the pool of Siloam, where the ancient wall turned northward from its southeastern corner, **and to the King's Pool,** Siloam itself; **but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass,** heaps of broken stones and rubbish everywhere were so high that his mule could not pick a path. V. 15. **Then went I up in the night by the brook,** he was obliged to go down along the Kidron, **and viewed the wall,** that on the eastern side, **and turned back, and entered by the Gate of the Valley,** where he had set forth, now probably the Jaffa Gate, **and so returned.** V. 16. **And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did,** he kept this survey a strict secret; **neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work,** neither the executive officers of the province nor the church officials, nor any others engaged in the public service had been informed of the purpose of his visit. V. 17. **Then said I unto them,** in a meeting called for that purpose, in which Nehemiah produced his credentials and addressed them in an inspiring manner, **Ye see the distress that we are in, the evil that had befallen them, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire; come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach,** objects of scorn and derision on the part of the enemies. V. 18. **Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me,** how the Lord had so obviously prospered him in his undertaking up to this time, **as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they,** inspired by his energy, said, **Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work,** being filled with vigor and energy, with every vestige of drooping spirits removed. V. 19. **But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah, the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian heard it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us,** with bitter taunts and scoffing ridicule, and said, **What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?** This was a mean insinuation, for the Jews had no intention of throwing off the yoke of the Persians. V. 20. **Then answered I them and said unto them, The God of heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we, His servants, will arise and build; but ye have no portion nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem.** They had cut themselves off from the true worship of Jehovah and therefore had nothing in common with the true worshipers. The activity of the Church often is made the object of rude jesting on the part of its enemies. But the only proper stand is that of an uncompromising aloofness in favor of the truth.

CHAPTER 3.

The Building of the Wall.

The Walls of the Lower City. — V. 1. **Then Eliashib, the high priest,** the grandson of Jeshua, who had returned with Zerubbabel, **rose up with his brethren, the priests, and they builded the Sheep Gate,** close to the Temple, probably on the northeastern side of the city, where the sheep for the sacrifices were driven in. **They sanctified it,** with certain religious ceremonies, **and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it,** which, apparently, was a hundred cubits from the gate, **unto the tower of Hananeel,** the next

tower over toward the Fish Gate. V. 2. **And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur,** the son of Imri, who may, according to the Hebrew, have been the leader of the men of Jericho. V. 3. **But the Fish Gate,** east of the present Damascus Gate in the north wall, **did the sons of Hassenaah build,** rather the sons, that is, the inhabitants of Senaah, apparently a city near Jericho, who also laid **the beams thereof, the crosspieces** over the entrance, **and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof,** either sockets or clamps, **and the bars thereof,** which were fitted into the sockets to secure the gate on the inside. V. 4. **And next unto them repaired Meremoth,** the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, rather, of the family of Hakkoz. **And next unto them repaired Meshullam,** the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. **And next unto them repaired Zadok,** the son of Baana. V. 5. **And next unto them the Tekoites,** from the little town of Tekoa, near Bethlehem, repaired; **but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord,** they refused to take part in the rebuilding of the wall. V. 6. **Moreover, the old gate repaired Jehoiada,** the son of Paseah, **and Meshullam,** the son of Besodeiah, this gate being apparently in the center of the north wall; **they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof and the locks thereof and the bars thereof.** V. 7. **And next unto them repaired Meletiah the Gibeonite,** that is, of Gibea, **and Jadon the Meronothite,** probably hailing from a suburb of Mizpah, **the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river,** Mizpah apparently being the seat of the Persian governor west of Jordan. V. 8. **Next unto him repaired Uzziel,** the son of Harhaiah, **of the goldsmiths,** for the tradespeople had organizations of their own and worked together. **Next unto him also repaired Hananiah,** the son of one of the apothecaries, makers of spices, ointments, and perfumes, **and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall,** the double wall extending from the Gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, the one that had been broken down by Joash of Israel, but afterward rebuilt by Uzziah of Judah. V. 9. **And next unto them repaired Rephaiah,** the son of Hur, **the ruler of the half-part of Jerusalem,** of half its circuit, which was a governmental term. V. 10. **And next unto them repaired Jedaiah,** the son of Harumaph, even **over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush,** the son of Hashabniah. V. 11. **Malchijah,** the son of Harim, **and Hashub,** the son of Pahath-moab, **repaired the other piece,** a second section assigned to them in addition to that mentioned in verse 23, **and the tower of the furnaces,** the extreme northeastern tower of the citadel, near the Jaffa Gate. V. 12. **And next unto him repaired Shallum,** the son of Halohesh, **the ruler of the half-part of Jerusalem,** of the second circuit, **he and his daughters,** the zeal of these women being mentioned as a commendable example. V. 13. **The Valley Gate repaired Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the Dung Gate,** at the southern extremity of Zion, where the rubbish was taken out to be burned outside the walls. V. 14. **But the Dung Gate repaired Malchiah,** the son of Rechab, **the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem,** of the circuit of Bethulia, near Tekoa; **he built it and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.** V. 15. **But the Gate of the Fountain,** near the Pool of Siloam, **repaired Shallum,** the son of Colhozeh, **the ruler of part of Mizpah,** of the circuit of Mizpah; for this was under the jurisdiction of a different man than the city itself; **he built it and covered it,** laying the crossbeams as in the case of the other gates, **and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the Pool of Siloah by the king's garden,** the royal park being watered from this pool, which received its water through a subterranean channel tunneled from the west side of the Kidron Valley, under the lower ridge of Ophel, which ran south of the Temple area, **and unto the stairs that go down from the City of David,** an inclined road leading down from the upper city. V. 16. **After him repaired Nehemiah,** the son of Azbuk, **the ruler of the half-part of Beth-zur,** of this circuit, which was north of Hebron, **unto the place over against the sepulchers of David,** the tombs of the kings, **and to the pool that was made,** presumably the present Fountain of the Virgin, **and unto the house of the mighty,** where the cliffs of Zion arose. V. 17. **After him repaired the Levites, Rehum,** the son of Bani. **Next unto him repaired Hashabiah,** the ruler of the half-part of Keilah, over the half-circuit of this name, **in his part.** V. 18. **After him repaired their brethren, Bavai,** the son of Henadad, **the ruler of the half-part of Keilah,** the second circuit named after this town. V. 19. **And next to him repaired Ezer,** the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece, in addition to that mentioned in verse 7, over against the going up to the armory at the turning of the wall, an angle where the Temple wall connected with the city wall. In the building of the Church of Christ all believers, young and old, men and women, each one according to his gifts and strength, should place himself in the service of the Lord.

THE WALLS OF ZION. — V. 20. **After him Baruch,** the son of Zabbai, **earnestly re-**

paired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib, the high priest. V. 21. **After him repaired Meremoth, the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, another piece, in addition to that named in verse 4, from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib,** the entire enclosure of his palace being meant. V. 22. **And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain,** the Valley of Jordan. V. 23. **After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house,** a second section in addition to that named in verse 11. **After him repaired Azariah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, by his house,** all these residences being in the same district, or quarter, as that of the high priest. V. 24. **After him repaired Binnui, the son of Henadad, another piece,** cp. v. 17, **from the house of Azariah unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner,** an outlying tower not far from the southeastern corner of the Temple. V. 25. **Palal, the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house,** the watch-tower by the royal palace, **that was by the court of the prison.** Cp. Jer. 32, 2. **After him Pedaiah, the son of Parosh.** V. 26. **Moreover, the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel,** and these also worked on the wall, **unto the place over against the Water Gate toward the east,** a gate opening into the subterranean reservoirs, **and the tower that lieth out,** the southern wall of the Temple area. V. 27. **After them the Tekoites repaired another piece,** cp. v. 5, **over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.** V. 28. **From above the Horse Gate,** which was between the Temple and the royal palace, **repaired the priests, every one over against his house.** V. 29. **After them repaired Zadok, the son of Immer, over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah, the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate,** one of the inner Temple gates. V. 30. **After him repaired Hananiah, the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece,** cp. v. 13. **After him repaired Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, over against his chamber,** cp. v. 4. V. 31. **After him repaired Malchiah, the goldsmith's son, unto the place of the Nethinim,** apparently the place where the traders brought their animals of all kinds for sale to worshipers in the Temple, **and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad,** one of those leading to the Temple area, **and to the going up of the corner,** the stairs leading to the northeast tower, not far from the Sheep Gate. V. 32. **And between the going up of the corner unto the Sheep Gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants,** both of whom were interested in the market which was held in this neighborhood. As the Jewish Church at this time had lost some of the finest appointments of the Temple, so in the Christian Church some of the special gifts of the Apostolic Age are no longer found in the same measure. But one thing has remained, the Word of God. Where this is taught in its truth and purity, the Lord Himself will come and make His abode with men.

CHAPTER 4.

Work on the Walls Continued.

THE PLANS OF THE ADVERSARIES.—V. 1. **But it came to pass that, when Sanballat,** the Samaritan leader, **heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation,** being filled with jealous rage, **and mocked the Jews,** not daring to use violence on account of the favor shown the Jews by the Persian monarch. V. 2. **And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria,** for he may actually have brought an armed force in sight of Jerusalem to intimidate the Jews, and said, **What do these feeble Jews? They were weak both as to wealth and as to numbers. Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day?** that is, Will they accomplish it by day, openly? **Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?** He tried to show the absurdity of Nehemiah's undertaking in raising the walls on the old foundations, in using the charred, moldered, and broken stones of the first wall. V. 3. **Now, Tobiah the Ammonite was by him,** chap. 2, 10, **and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.** Tobiah seconded his master in the attempted ridicule by declaring that the strength of a fox, many of which had made their dens on Mount Zion during the exile, Lam. 5, 18, was sufficient to overthrow the wall. At this point Nehemiah inserts a personal remark. V. 4. **Hear, O our God; for we are despised; and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity,** v. 5, **and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before Thee; for they have provoked Thee to anger before the builders,** in the sight of the Jews engaged in the work of building the walls, or, vexed with alarm the builders. It was not a vindictive utterance, but a prophetic prayer flowing from pious and patriotic zeal for the glory of God and the success of His cause. V. 6. **So built we the wall,** continuing in spite of all the efforts of the enemies to discourage them; **and**

all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, the half of the intended height; for the people had a mind to work, with the exception of a few, who were related to the Samaritans, they worked with a will. Those who undertake the work of the Lord in true faith will not permit the ridicule of the enemies to discourage them, but will piously trust in the power of God to support them.

NEHEMIAH'S PRECAUTIONS. — V. 7. **But it came to pass that, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians,** such tribes as took the side of the Samaritans, **and the Ammonites,** those incited by Tobiah, **and the Ashdodites,** the inhabitants of this Philistine city with their ancient hatred of the Jews, **heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up,** literally, "going up," **and that the breaches began to be stopped,** where the walls had been entirely demolished, **then they were very wroth,** v. 8. **and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem,** to make it seem that they all together were acting in behalf of the king, **and to hinder it,** to cause confusion and wickedness. V. 9. **Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night because of them,** to ward off any sudden attack. V. 10. **And Judah,** the Jews, **said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed,** they were becoming weak from the strain of restless building, **and there is much rubbish,** very disagreeable to remove, **so that we are not able to build the wall.** V. 11. **And our adversaries said, They shall not know neither see till we come in the midst among them,** in a sudden, destructive attack, **and slay them, and cause the work to cease.** V. 12. **And it came to pass that, when the Jews which dwelt by them came,** from the towns near the enemy, **they said unto us ten times,** very frequently, **From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you,** or, "From all places ye shall return unto us." The enemies had succeeded in intimidating them to such an extent that they were ready to give up the project in discouragement. V. 13. **Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall,** where the wall was lowest in height, **and on the higher places,** literally, "the exposed parts," where an attack had most chances of being successful, **I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows,** these detachments for defense being made up of the families working near such breaches in the wall. V. 14. **And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles,** since it seemed that the whole community was being infected with fear, **and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible,** who may well be expected to inspire awe and fear in the hearts of the enemies, **and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses,** for all of them were in jeopardy with these lawless hordes ready to swoop down upon Jerusalem. V. 15. **And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to naught,** by causing it to be revealed, **that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work,** which had been abandoned at the first alarm. V. 16. **And it came to pass from that time forth that the half of my servants,** the special detachment under his command, **wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons,** in full armor, with their weapons ready for defense; **and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah,** ready to take command at any point that was attacked. V. 17. **They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded,** that is, the burden-bearers while carrying, **every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other hand held a weapon,** a javelin, or small spear. V. 18. **For the builders,** those employed in masonwork on the wall, **every one had his sword girded by his side and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me,** ready to sound the alarm at any time. V. 19. **And I said unto the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.** V. 20. **In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us,** rushing to the assistance of the attacked point at once; **our God shall fight for us.** V. 21. **So we labored in the work; and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared,** with tireless vigilance. V. 22. **Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem,** those living in distant villages and towns and even in the suburbs making their home in the capital for the time being, **that in the night they may be a guard to us and labor on the day,** even at night they could be aroused for the defense of the city. V. 23. **So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me,** all those of Nehemiah's immediate family, together with his attendants, **none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing,** literally, "man his weapon the water," which may mean that they even slept in their clothes, or that they took their weapons along with them even when they went for water, taking them off only for necessary ablutions. In spiritual matters also steadfast, eternal vigilance is needed, for the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

CHAPTER 5.

The Abuse of Usury Corrected.

The Complaint of the People Adjusted by Nehemiah. — V. 1. **And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives,** namely, the poorer ones in the nation, **against their brethren, the Jews,** the richer members of their own nation, who were taking advantage of their poverty. V. 2. **For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore we take up corn for them that we may eat and live.** The more exact rendering of this sentence seems to be: We have mortgaged our sons and our daughters that we might buy corn. They had been forced by their creditors to give their very children as security, as hostages, in order to get food for their families. V. 3. **Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses that we might buy corn because of the dearth.** The shortage of food may have been due as well to the excessive rains, Ezra 10, 9; Hag. 1, 6—11, as to the fact that the Samaritan adversaries managed to keep so many of them penned up in the city of Jerusalem, which made it impossible for them to till their lands. V. 4. **There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute,** the taxes laid upon them by the Persian government, **and that upon our lands and vineyards.** It was a most deplorable condition of affairs which compelled these poorer members of the congregation to mortgage their children and all their property for the sake of procuring food and the necessary funds to pay their taxes to the Persian government. V. 5. **Yet, now, our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children,** they rightly felt that they had equal rights with their richer neighbors before the Lord; **and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants,** practically forced to sell them as slaves, **and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already,** apparently said of their being used for immoral purposes, Ex. 21, 7—11; **neither is it in our power to redeem them,** literally, "and not is toward God our hand"; **for other men have our lands and vineyards,** they were at the mercy of their creditors. V. 6. **And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words,** since these conditions were strictly against the Law of Jehovah, Ex. 22, 25—27. V. 7. **Then I consulted with myself,** since his heart was filled with pity for his oppressed brethren, **and I rebuked the nobles and the rulers,** these being the guilty ones in this instance, **and said unto them, Ye exact usury,** both in taking pledges and in charging interest, **every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them,** calling a mass-meeting in spite of the urgent need of wall-building, in order to have the outrage stopped immediately by the expression of the opinion of the whole congregation. V. 8. **And I said unto them,** with great force and emphasis, **We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren, the Jews,** by paying ransom-money to free them from bondage in the land of their captivity, **which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren, or shall they be sold unto us?** That is what the custom then in vogue practically amounted to, an enslaving of the poor. **Then held they their peace and found nothing to answer,** being overcome by Nehemiah's remonstrance. V. 9. **Also I said, It is not good that ye do,** there was a second reason which condemned their action. **Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God,** in a wholesome awe of His holy presence, **because of the reproach of the heathen, our enemies?** If the latter heard of the conditions existing in the midst of the Jews, they would be sure to reproach them, to scoff at them. V. 10. **I likewise, and my brethren and my servants, might exact of them money and corn,** rather, "And also I, that is, my brethren and my servants, exact of them, by lending them money," members of his own family had been found guilty. **I pray you, let us leave off this usury,** which was expressly forbidden in the Law, Ex. 22, 25; Lev. 25, 36; Deut. 23, 19. V. 11. **Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive-yards, and their houses,** everything that had been taken as security, **also the hundredth part of the money and of the corn, the wine and the oil, that ye exact of them,** the interest charged them, which amounted to twelve per cent. a year. V. 12. **Then said they,** overcome by the force of the arguments used by Nehemiah, **We will restore them,** both the pledges and the interest exacted, **and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests,** as the representatives of the Lord, **and took an oath of them,** the priests administering this solemn oath, **that they should do according to this promise,** the men involved thus binding themselves before the face of Jehovah Himself. V. 13. **Also I shook my lap,** the bosom of his outer garment, which was used as a pocket, **and said, So God shake out every man from his house and from his labor that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied.** It was a symbolical act, also used by the Apostle Paul at a later time, Acts 18, 6, and similar to that of shaking off the dust from the garments and feet in the time of Jesus. **And all the congregation said, Amen,** stating their full agreement with the sentiments expressed by Nehemiah, **and praised the Lord. And the**

people did according to this promise, they lived up to their solemn agreement, as Nehemiah carefully notes. If similar conditions are found in a Christian congregation, if richer members forget their duties of love and mercy toward their poorer brethren, the Word of God must be applied with the emphasis required by the occasion until the wrong has been righted.

NEHEMIAH'S FINE EXAMPLE. — V. 14. **Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah,** Nehemiah interrupting his narrative in order to make this explanation concerning his entire term of office, **from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years,** at the end of which time he wrote this history, **I and my brethren,** the other men of his family, **have not eaten the bread of the governor.** V. 15. **But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, they accepted the salary** allowed them by the Persian king, **and had taken of them bread and wine beside forty shekels of silver** (amounting to about $360 a year, in cash alone, or, according to others, to some $30 a day); **yea, even their servants bare rule over the people; but so did not I because of the fear of God,** which caused him to seek the welfare of the people first. V. 16. **Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land,** namely, for purposes of speculation; **and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work,** they were not excused from building the wall. V. 17. **Moreover, there were at my table,** partaking of his hospitality, **an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers,** which made his establishment a very costly one, **beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us,** visitors to whom he freely showed hospitality. V. 18. **Now, that which was prepared for me daily,** being used up in this great household, **was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine. Yet, for all this,** which he might have charged to his salary, **required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage,** both the taxes of the government and the requirements of their national welfare, **was heavy upon this people,** they had difficulty in meeting all these obligations. V. 19. **Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people,** rather, "Remember to me, my God, for all the good which I did upon this people," as a fine example to all Christians whose circumstances permit them to do an unusual amount of good to their fellow-Christians and to all men. If God has blessed men with this world's goods, they should be glad to share them with those who are less fortunately situated and are truly in need.

CHAPTER 6.

Further Obstacles and Completion of the Wall.

THE ENMITY OF SANBALLAT. — V. 1. **Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian,** the same men who had tried to make trouble before, chap. 2, 10. 19; 4, 1. 7, **and the rest of our enemies heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein,** (**though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates,** the openings being finished, but the massive doors themselves having not yet been hung,) v. 2. **that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the Plain of Ono,** naming a town in the tribe of Benjamin, near what is now Lydda in the Plain of Sharon. Open threats having failed of their purpose, the enemies were determined to try deceit and stratagem. **But they thought to do me mischief,** as Nehemiah immediately concluded, their object being to get him into their power and thus hinder the completion of the fortifications. V. 3. **And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?** Without in any way stating his suspicions, Nehemiah pleaded the importance of the work which he had undertaken. V. 4. **Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort,** hoping to wear down his resistance by their persistent efforts; **and I answered them after the same manner,** for he was too shrewd to fall into the trap prepared for him. V. 5. **Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand,** the intention being to stir up the Jews against Nehemiah, (at the same time, a letter which was not sealed and not enclosed in a special covering, as the custom of the time prescribed, was not so much informal as designedly disrespectful, a fact which Nehemiah was bound to notice at once,) v. 6. **wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu** (Geshem the Arabian, v. 1) **saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel,** planning to throw off the Persian rule; **for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king,** according to these words, the alleged rumor to which Sanballat referred. V. 7. **And thou**

hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, to proclaim his selection by divine authority, **saying, There is a king in Judah; and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words.** This was, of course, an empty threat, a bluff. **Come now, therefore, and let us take counsel together.** V. 8. **Then I sent unto him,** for Nehemiah readily saw through the scheme of the enemies, **saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest,** he denied that there was even so much as a rumor afloat concerning a proposed rebellion, **but thou feignest them out of thine own heart,** they were an invention of Sanballat's jealous mind. V. 9. **For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work that it be not done.** That this was the purpose was so evident that Nehemiah was bound to notice it. **Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands!** That was Nehemiah's prayer at that time, showing where he placed his trust in the difficult situation confronting him. Similar tricks are tried by the world even in our days, particularly in their efforts to intimidate true Christian pastors. If open enmity fails, the adversaries resort to veiled threats in order to hinder the preaching of the Gospel.

SHEMAIAH, THE FALSE PROPHET. — V. 10. **Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel,** a man who claimed the gift of prophecy for himself, **who was shut up,** probably in performance of a vow; **and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the Temple,** in the Sanctuary proper, **and let us shut the doors of the Temple,** the inference being that Shemaiah had been granted a revelation according to which men had planned an attempt on the life of Nehemiah in the near future; **for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.** The purpose of this scheme was either to bring discredit upon Nehemiah in making him appear guilty, or to make him seem a coward, who preferred his personal safety to that of the city which it was his duty to protect. V. 11. **And I said, Should such a man as I flee?** the governor entrusted with the defense of the city? **And who is there that, being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his life?** This may mean either that he refused to hide in a cowardly fashion, or that he did not want to risk death by violating the sanctity of the Temple, Num. 18, 7. **I will not go in.** V. 12. **And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me,** without any divine authority; **for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him,** he was acting under the influence of a secret bribe. V. 13. **Therefore was he hired that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin,** both by neglecting his duty as governor and by entering into the Sanctuary of the Temple, which was open only to the priests, **and that they might have matter for an evil report,** to discredit him in the one or the other way, as shown above, **that they might reproach me.** Nehemiah therefore adds a prayer concerning this spiteful attempt at intimidating and discrediting him. V. 14. **My God, think Thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works,** to execute His vengeance upon them, **and on the prophetess Noadiah,** another of the false prophets who had been bribed to hinder the work of building the walls, **and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear,** all of them hired with Sanballat's money. Thus there are teachers in the very midst of Christianity who with open lies and deceitful words try to hinder the work of the Lord, endeavoring to lead the true servants of God into disobedience.

THE WALL COMPLETED. —V. 15. **So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul,** corresponding roughly to the latter part of August and the greater part of September, **in fifty and two days,** showing that the builders were inspired with great love and zeal for the work. V. 16. **And it came to pass that, when all our enemies heard thereof and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God,** since it had been brought to a successful conclusion in spite of all the enmity from without and the dissension within, as it had been brought about by the bribes. The divine cooperation was evident throughout. V. 17. **Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah,** literally, "multiplied their letters going to Tobiah," thus becoming traitors to their own cause, **and the letters of Tobiah came unto them.** V. 18. **For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah, the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah,** the evil of mixed marriages with the enemies of the Lord appearing here once more. V. 19. **Also they reported his good deeds before me,** in trying to influence Nehemiah in his favor, **and uttered my words to him,** informing the enemy of all the matters undertaken by Nehemiah, so that Tobiah was able to plan new schemes to hinder the work. **And Tobiah,** with all this information at his command, **sent letters to put me in fear.** As Nehemiah and the faithful Jews continued in the task set before them in spite of all attempts of the enemies to discourage them, so all true Christians will work for the Lord consistently, letting neither threats nor enticements keep them from performing the labor entrusted to them.

CHAPTER 7.

The City of Jerusalem and Its Inhabitants.

THE CHARGE OF THE CITY. — V. 1. **Now it came to pass, when the wall was built and I had set up the doors,** completing everything as it had been planned, **and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed,** the Levites who had charge of the gates and those who were entrusted with the liturgical part of the Temple service being distinguished from those who assisted the priests in the sacrificial worship, as David had ordered, 1 Chron. 9, 17—27; 26, 1—19, v. 2. **that I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah, the ruler of the palace,** this office being held after the end of the monarchy, cp. 2 Kings 18, 37; 2 Chron. 26, 21, in the form of prime minister to the governor, **charge over Jerusalem; for he was a faithful man and feared God above many,** his faithfulness being an outflow of his fear of God, a fact which caused Nehemiah to place such confidence in him, for he was sure that this fact would keep Hananiah from the temptations to treachery and unfaithfulness which were likely to come to him. V. 3. **And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot,** the custom being to open them at sunrise, when the enemies might still take advantage of the shadows to attempt an attack; **and while they stand by,** that is, the members of the guard, ready to defend the gates, **let them shut the doors and bar them,** this being done at sunset; **and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem,** men living throughout the city, **every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house,** mounting guard, as sentinel, near his own property, in order to prevent any gathering of people that may have entered into the city for the purpose of starting a riot. V. 4. **Now, the city was large and great, but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded,** that is, its area was very great in proportion to its population, which explains the necessity of the measures adopted by Nehemiah before returning to Shushan, as he had promised the Persian king, chap. 2, 6. Nehemiah took every precaution to insure the safety of the city during his absence. The Church of Christ is also the city of God and His holy habitation. The ministers of the Church therefore must be diligent in their office as watchmen and defenders of Zion, lest the enemies take advantage of some oversight in its defense.

A LIST OF RETURNED EXILES. — V. 5. **And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles and the rulers and the people that they might be reckoned by genealogy,** his idea being to increase the number of the city's inhabitants by appropriate measures. **And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, a list of the time of Zerubbabel,** some ninety years before, **and found written therein,** v. 6. **These are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city,** cp. Ezra 2, v. 7. **who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah** (or Seraiah), **Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah.** It should be noted at once that the difference between the figures given in this list and those in the list of Ezra is probably due to the fact that Zerubbabel had the list of the caravan as it was assembled for the journey, while Nehemiah used a copy which showed the members of the caravan as it actually arrived in Jerusalem, or those registered in Jerusalem upon their arrival are here mentioned, some of the people going directly to the homesteads of their fathers, without waiting for a second registration. **The number, I say, of the men of the people of Israel was this:** v. 8. **the children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.** V. 9. **The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.** V. 10. **The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two.** V. 11. **The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred and eighteen.** V. 12. **The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.** V. 13. **The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five.** V. 14. **The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.** V. 15. **The children of Binnui** (or Bani), **six hundred forty and eight.** V. 16. **The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight.** V. 17. **The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two,** this being a sample of a case where a large company from a father-house joined the caravan after the list of its members had been prepared. V. 18. **The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven.** V. 19. **The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven.** V. 20. **The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five.** V. 21. **The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.** V. 22. **The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight.** V. 23. **The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four.** V. 24. **The children of Hariph** (or Jorah), **an hundred and twelve.** V. 25. **The children of Gibeon** (or Gibbar), **ninety and five.** V. 26. **The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight.** V. 27. **The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.** V. 28.

The men of Beth-azmaveth, forty and two. V. 29. **The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three.** V. 30. **The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.** V. 31. **The men of Michmas, an hundred and twenty and two.** V. 32. **The men of Bethel and Ai, an hundred twenty and three.** V. 33. **The men of the other Nebo,** the Nobe in Judah, to distinguish it from that in the territory of Reuben, **fifty and two.** V. 34. **The children of the other Elam,** distinguished from those of v. 12, **a thousand two hundred fifty and four.** V. 35. **The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.** V. 36. **The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.** V. 37. **The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one.** For the location of the cities mentioned in this list compare the notes on Ezra 2. V. 38. **The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.** V. 39. **The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.** V. 40. **The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.** V. 41. **The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.** V. 42. **The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.** It seems that only four courses of priests returned from Babylon, at least at the time of the first journey under Zerubbabel. The four courses were afterward once more divided into twenty-four, with the names of the original courses which David appointed. V. 43. **The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the children of Hodevah** (or Hodaviah), **seventy and four.** V. 44. **The singers: the children of Asaph,** the only ones returned from exile at that time, **an hundred forty and eight.** V. 45. **The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, an hundred thirty and eight.** V. 46. **The Nethinim: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,** v. 47. **the children of Keros, the children of Sia** (or Siaha), **the children of Padon,** v. 48. **the children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmai** (or Shamlai), v. 49. **the children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar,** v. 50. **the children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda,** v. 51. **the children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah,** v. 52. **the children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim** (or Nephusim), v. 53. **the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,** v. 54. **the children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,** v. 55. **the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah,** v. 56. **the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.** All these belonged to the Nethinim, who were in charge of the minor tasks in the Temple. V. 57. **The children of Solomon's servants,** below the Nethinim in rank: **the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida,** v. 58. **the children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,** v. 59. **the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon** (or Ami). V. 60. **All the Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants were three hundred ninety and two.** V. 61. **And these were they which went up also from Telmelah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon** (or Addan), **and Immer; but they could not show their father's house, could not produce evidence of their descent, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel.** V. 62. **The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two.** V. 63. **And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife and was called after their name,** an act which now cost his descendants their rights as members of the Jewish congregation. V. 64. **These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore were they, as polluted,** their priestly descent not being clearly shown by documents, **put from the priesthood,** Ezra 2, 61. 62. V. 65. **And the Tirshatha,** the governor, at that time Zerubbabel, **said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things,** the special privilege of the priests, **till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim,** those connected with the high priest's breastplate, Ex. 28, 30, by means of which the high priest inquired of God, Num. 27, 21; 1 Sam. 28, 6. V. 66. **The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,** v. 67. **beside their man-servants and their maid-servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven; and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women,** probably a guild of professional entertainers. V. 68. **Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;** v. 69. **their camels, four hundred thirty and five; six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.** Here the list of the people and their possessions ends.

THE GIFTS OF THE GOVERNOR AND OF THE PEOPLE. — V. 70. **And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work,** namely, that of restoring the Temple and of beautifying its worship. **The Tirshatha,** in this case

apparently Nehemiah himself, gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, that is, of the Persian darics, which were the legal money of the kingdom, fifty basins, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. V. 71. And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver (the daric being valued at between five and six dollars, and the pound of silver at $32). V. 72. And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drams (darics) of gold, and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments. V. 73. So the priests and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities, all of which leads up to the account of the great festival celebrated in that month, with Nehemiah present, as he proceeds to relate. It is well-pleasing to the Lord if people are willing to sacrifice of their money and goods for the support of the Church and for the spread of the kingdom.

CHAPTER 8

Progress in Restoring the Worship.

THE LAW READ AND HEARD. — V. 1. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man, with entire unanimity of mind, into the street that was before the Water Gate, a large open square near the subterranean water galleries of Ophel; and they spake unto Ezra, the scribe, who had come to Jerusalem some thirteen years before with about three thousand returned exiles, to bring the book of the Law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Ezra may have returned to Babylon after instituting his reform measures, and now had made the trip a second time to assist Nehemiah in the further restoration of the Temple worship. V. 2. And Ezra, the priest, brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, either because they were old enough, or because they were within reach of Ezra's voice, upon the first day of the seventh month. The beginning of the seventh month of the church-year, the new year of the civil year, was known as the Feast of Trumpets, which was held as a great day. It speaks well for the Jews at that time that there was a desire for hearing the Law of God read, for such public reading of the Word was required every seventh year. Cp. Lev. 23, 24; Num. 19, 1—6. V. 3. And he read therein, from the roll of parchment on which the Books of Moses were written, before the street that was before the Water Gate, before the great assembly in the public square, from the morning, from the time it became light, until midday, for some six hours, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the Book of the Law, whose principal sections could be read in that time. V. 4. And Ezra, the scribe, stood upon a pulpit of wood, a high platform with space for more than a dozen men, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. These priests not only gave Ezra their moral support, but probably also relieved him from time to time in the reading of the Law. V. 5. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, unrolling the parchment as he progressed with his reading; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up. V. 6. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God; he opened his reading with a solemn prayer, during which the people stood, and at the conclusion of which they gave their assent with the word used for that purpose to this day. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, in a gesture of supplication; and they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground, the attitude of reverent adoration. V. 7. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, that is, other Levites, for the first thirteen were leaders among the Levites, caused the people to understand the Law, by explaining the sections read by Ezra to smaller groups, or by translating unusual Hebrew words into Aramaic, the language now chiefly spoken by the people; and the people stood in their place. V. 8. So they, Ezra and his assistants, read in the book, in the Law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. That is the right kind of religious service, when the Word of God is read and explained, and when all who hear it accept it in all sincerity, with praise and thanksgiving to God.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. — V. 9. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, he being the governor of Judea under appointment from the Persian king, and Ezra, the priest, the scribe, the learned doctor of priestly descent, and the Levites that taught

the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord, your God; mourn not nor weep, they were to give no evidence of mourning, deeply as they were affected by the reading, for this would have disturbed the holiness of the day. **For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law,** overcome with the sense of their national sins, as brought out by the reading of the commands and prohibitions of the Lord. V. 10. **Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat,** the special fine foods of the festival season, **and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared,** with the spirit spoken of in Deut. 16, 11. 12; **for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry,** full of mournfulness, **for the joy of the Lord is your strength.** Every one who, by reason of God's promise in His Word, is sure of God's kindness and love toward him will not only feel a holy joy over this fact, but will also be filled with wonderful strength in walking the ways of God's will. V. 11. **So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.** V. 12. **And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions,** in the right thankfulness which the occasion demanded, Lev. 23, 23—25, **and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.** V. 13. **And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra, the scribe, even to understand,** to consider most carefully, **the words of the Law,** including such ordinances as had not again been observed since the return from the exile. V. 14. **And they found written in the Law which the Lord had commanded by Moses,** namely, in Lev. 23, 34—42; Deut. 16, 13, **that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month,** in the so-called Feast of Tabernacles; v. 15. **and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount,** the range of which the Mount of Olives was the highest, **and fetch olive-branches, and pine-branches,** those of the oil-tree of Palestine, **and myrtle-branches,** a small tree with tangled branches and thick foliage, **and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees,** cp. Lev. 23, 40, **to make booths, as it is written.** V. 16. **So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths,** Deut. 16, 13—17, **every one upon the roof of his house,** the roofs of Oriental houses being flat, **and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the Water Gate,** the large open square near the Temple, **and in the street of the Gate of Ephraim,** a large open place in the northwestern part of the city. V. 17. **And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths and sat under the booths,** they lived in them during the week of the festival; **for since the days of Jeshua, the son of Nun, unto that day had not the children of Israel done so,** the enthusiasm and joy of the people had never reached such heights as at this time, when they were once more realizing what it meant to be delivered from captivity among the heathen. **And there was very great gladness.** V. 18. **Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he,** Ezra, **read in the Book of the Law of God,** the zeal of the people causing him to do even more than the Law actually required. **And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner,** Lev. 23, 36; Num. 29, 35; Deut. 16, 8. The convocation of the eighth day was characterized by unusual solemnity and impressiveness, and significant rites were later added to the customs of the day, as seen from John 7, 37. Even as Israel rejoiced at that time, because the Lord lived in its midst, so the Christian Church is full of gladness at all times because God makes His abode in the hearts of all believers.

CHAPTER 9.

A Day of Prayer and Penitence.

THE REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE. — V. 1. **Now, in the twenty and fourth day of this month,** two days after the close of the Feast of Tabernacles, **the children of Israel were assembled with fasting and with sackclothes, and earth upon them,** all signs of the deepest mourning and sorrow, as they recognized the transgressions of the people, as they became conscious of the punishment which they had deserved by their disregard of God's laws. V. 2. **And the seed of Israel,** the Jews of pure blood, **separated themselves from all strangers,** foreigners who had become mixed with the Jews by marriage, **and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers,** principally in contracting such marriages as were expressly forbidden by God; for the reforms of Ezra had not lasted, the people having once more taken up, not only commercial intercourse, but also the dangerous custom of intermarriages with the heathen nations. V. 3. **And they,** probably Ezra and his assistants, **stood up in their place, on the platform erected for that purpose, and read in the Book of the Law of the Lord, their God, one-fourth part of the day,** apparently from early morning till

about nine o'clock; **and another fourth part they confessed and worshiped the Lord, their God,** they expressed the sorrowful feelings aroused by the reading of the Law and acknowledged His great mercy in forgiving their offenses in spite of all their wrong-doing and in continuing the blessings of His Word among them. That is the proper attitude of mind in approaching the Lord at all times, a deep and sincere recognition of sins together with a firm trust in God's mercy.

THE LEVITES CONFESS THE PEOPLE'S WICKEDNESS. —V. 4. **Then stood up upon the stairs,** the platforms from which the people were usually addressed, **of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord, their God,** acting as spokesmen for the entire congregation. V. 5. **Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said,** following an order of worship which had been arranged beforehand, **Stand up and bless the Lord, your God, forever and ever; and blessed be Thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.** As Luther says: God's name is indeed holy and glorious in itself, and all our praising will not make it one bit more glorious; yet our blessing and our thanksgiving should arise to Him at every occasion. The confession, as pronounced by the Levites, had undoubtedly been prepared in the form of a written document, and the language shows that it was largely taken from the earlier holy books of the Jews. V. 6. **Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone,** beside whom there is no other god; **Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens,** the unseen as well as the visible heaven, **with all their host,** of angel inhabitants, **the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth Thee.** Note the clear and unmistakable statement concerning the creation and preservation of the universe by the almighty power of God alone. V. 7. **Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees,** Gen. 12, 1, **and gavest him the name of Abraham,** Gen. 17, 5; v. 8. **and foundest his heart faithful before Thee,** Gen. 15, 6, **and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed Thy words; for Thou art righteous,** just in keeping His promises, v. 9. **and didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,** Ex. 2, 25, **and heardest their cry by the Red Sea,** Ex. 14, 10, v. 10. **and showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh and on all his servants and on all the people of his land in the ten great plagues that were sent upon Egypt; for Thou knewest that they, Pharaoh and his people, dealt proudly against them, the children of Israel. So didst Thou get Thee a name, as it is this day,** Ex. 9, 16. V. 11. **And Thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land,** Ex. 14, 21—28; **and their persecutors Thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters,** rushing and violent billows which overwhelmed them, Ex. 15, 5. V. 12. **Moreover, Thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar,** Ex. 13, 21, **and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go,** thus completing the deliverance begun in Egypt. V. 13. **Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai and spakest with them from heaven,** Ex. 19, 20, **and gavest them right judgments,** enabling them to discriminate between right and wrong, **and true laws,** a code of laws which embodies the truth of God's essence, **good statutes,** precepts and decrees concerning their covenant relation to God, **and commandments,** orders pertaining to their entire life in all its relations to their fellow-men; v. 14. **and madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath,** Ex. 20, 8. 11, **and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws,** both those concerning them as God's covenant people and those governing their relation to all men, **by the hand of Moses, Thy servant,** v. 15. **and gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger,** Ex. 16, 14, **and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst,** Ex. 17, 6, **and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which Thou hadst sworn to give them,** Deut. 1, 8. After this enumeration of God's blessings upon Israel the ingratitude of the people is shown. V. 16. **But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks,** Deut. 31, 27, **and hearkened not to Thy commandments,** v. 17. **and refused to obey, neither were they mindful of the wonders that Thou didst among them,** Ps. 78, 11, **but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage,** Num. 14, 4. **But Thou art a God ready to pardon,** literally, "of pardons," one who makes pardoning His business, **gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not,** Ex. 34, 6. V. 18. **Yea, when they had made them a molten calf and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations,** by provoking the Lord to anger; v. 19. **yet Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day to lead them in the way, neither the pillar of fire**

by night to show them light, rather, to shed light for them, **and the way wherein they should go.** V. 20. **Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them,** Num. 11, 17, **and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth,** giving it to them throughout their desert journey, Ex. 16, 15, **and gavest them water for their thirst,** Ex. 17, 6. V. 21. **Yea, forty years didst Thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing,** Deut. 2, 7; **their clothes waxed not old,** being preserved in some miraculous manner, Deut. 8, 4; 29, 5, **and their feet swelled not.** V. 22. **Moreover, Thou gavest them kingdoms and nations,** putting them into possession of a great and rich country, **and didst divide them into corners,** giving them sections of the conquered land, to each tribe a possession of his own; **so they possessed the land of Sihon and the land of the king of Heshbon and the land of Og, king of Bashan,** Num. 21; Deut. 2 and 3. V. 23. **Their children also multipliedst Thou as the stars of heaven and broughtest them into the land concerning which Thou hadst promised to their fathers that they should go in to possess it.** V. 24. **So the children went in and possessed the land,** Josh. 1, 2, **and Thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites,** the collective name for all the heathen nations of Canaan, **and gavest them into their hands, with their kings and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would,** in annihilating and eradicating them. V. 25. **And they took strong cities and a fat land,** Num. 13, 27, **and possessed houses full of all goods,** Deut. 6, 11, **wells digged,** that is, the cisterns which are used so extensively in the Orient, **vineyards and olive-yards and fruit-trees in abundance. So they did eat, and were filled, and became fat,** literally, "made themselves fat," Deut. 32, 15, **and delighted themselves in Thy great goodness.** The contrast between this merciful kindness on the part of the Lord and the wickedness of the people is now again emphasized. V. 26. **Nevertheless, they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy Law behind their backs,** in a form of haughty rejection, **and slew Thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee,** Matt. 23, 37; Acts 7, 52; **and they wrought great provocations.** V. 27. **Therefore Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them,** Judg. 2, 14; **and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto Thee, Thou heardest them from heaven; and according to Thy manifold mercies Thou gavest them saviors,** as from the time of Joshua to the time of Samuel, Judg. 2, 18, **who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.** V. 28. **But after they had rest,** when they had taken possession of the Promised Land, **they did evil again before Thee; therefore leftest Thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them. Yet, when they returned and cried unto Thee, Thou heardest them from heaven,** as the entire history of both kingdoms abundantly shows; **and many times didst Thou deliver them according to Thy mercies,** v. 29. **and testifiedst against them, that Thou mightest bring them again unto Thy Law,** admonishing them time and again to return to His ways and to keep His precepts. **Yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto Thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments,** the ordinances concerning man's behavior in general, (**which, if a man do, he shall live in them,** Lev. 18, 5; Luke 10, 28;) **and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.** V. 30. **Yet many years didst Thou forbear them,** extending His patience and mercy concerning them, **and testifiedst against them,** in admonishing them time and again, **by Thy Spirit in Thy prophets. Yet would they not give ear; therefore gavest Thou them into the hand of the people of the lands,** permitting the heathen kings to lead them away into exile. V. 31. **Nevertheless, for Thy great mercies' sake Thou didst not utterly consume them nor forsake them,** even during their captivity in Babylon; **for Thou art a gracious and merciful God.** V. 32. **Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy,** faithfully keeping the provisions of His covenant in spite of Israel's violation of it, and ready to accept His people as soon as they returned to Him in true repentance, **let not all the trouble seem little before Thee that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all Thy people since the time of the kings of Assyria,** namely, the days of Pul and of Tiglath-pileser, 2 Kings 15, 19. 29, **unto this day.** V. 33. **Howbeit, Thou art just in all that is brought upon us,** a fact which they acknowledged without the slightest reservation; **for Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly;** v. 34. **neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept Thy Law nor hearkened unto Thy commandments and Thy testimonies wherewith Thou didst testify against them,** admonishing them to repentance. V. 35. **For they have not served Thee in their kingdom and in Thy great goodness that Thou gavest them,** that is, in the great prosperity wherewith He had blessed them, **and in the large and fat land which Thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.** V. 36. **Behold, we are servants this day,** no longer an independent nation, but a province

of the Persian empire, and for the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; v. 37. and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins, for the Persian kings derived a rich revenue from the provinces of Canaan; also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, drafting both the Jews and their work-cattle into service at any time, and we are in great distress. V. 38. And because of all this we make a sure covenant and write it, subscribing and signing the written document, in order to make it more impressive before all the people; and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it, all this having a tendency to keep them from breaking the covenant. Even as the small congregation of Jews turned to the Lord in true repentance and was accepted by Him, so it pleases our heavenly Father to have His Christian Church turn to Him for deliverance from all evil.

CHAPTER 10.

The Covenant Made by the Jews.

THE SIGNERS OF THE COVENANT.—V. 1. Now, those that sealed were, literally, "those on the sealings," that is, the names of those appearing on the sealed documents: Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, he being the first signer, not only by virtue of his office as the representative of the Persian monarch, but also on account of his own individual zeal for the cause, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah; v. 2. Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, v. 3. Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, v. 4. Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, v. 5. Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, v. 6. Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, v. 7. Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, v. 8. Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah. These were the priests. Throughout the list there is little value in attempting to identify these men, for most of them are common names and were not confined to any one family. V. 9. And the Levites: both Jeshua, the son of Azaniah, Binnui, of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel, v. 10. and their brethren: Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, v. 11. Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, v. 12. Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, v. 13. Hodijah, Bani, Beninu. Some of these at least are identical with the Levites named in chap. 9, 4. 5. V. 14. The chief of the people, the elders who represented the entire nation: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zatthu, Bani, v. 15. Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, v. 16. Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, v. 17. Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur, v. 18. Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, v. 19. Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, v. 20. Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, v. 21. Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua, v. 22. Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, v. 23. Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub, v. 24. Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek, v. 25. Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, v. 26. and Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, v. 27. Malluch, Harim, Baanah, some of whom took a very prominent part in the affairs of the people. As these eighty-three heads of families subscribed the covenant for the congregation, so the voting members of a Christian congregation assume the responsibility for the preaching of the Word and pledge their support by signing the constitution.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT. — V. 28. And the rest of the people, those who had not personally subscribed the covenant and yet were in hearty accord with all its provisions, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinim, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the Law of God, by repudiating both mixed marriages and all other intercourse which might lead to indifference and carelessness toward the pure religion, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge and having understanding, those who had the correct idea regarding the will of the Lord and were ready to uphold the right understanding in their entire lives, v. 29. they clave to their brethren, standing upon the side of those who had sealed the covenant, their nobles, and entered into a curse and into an oath to walk in God's Law which was given by Moses, the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord, our Lord, and His judgments and His statutes, calling down the curse of God upon themselves if they would violate their promise; v. 30. and that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons, thus doing away with the evil of mixed marriages entirely; v. 31. and if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath-day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath or on the holy-day, on any festival-day fixed by the ordinance of God; and that we would leave the seventh year, that is, leave the land fallow each seventh year, Ex. 23, 11, and the exaction of every debt, remitting in the seventh year the debt of every person, as the Law required, Deut. 15, 2. V. 32. Also we made ordinances for us to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel (about 21 cents) for the service of the house of our God, this sum being afterwards raised to a half-shekel, Matt. 17, 24, v. 33. for the showbread, that for the Holy Place, which was renewed every Sabbath, Lev. 24, 5, and for

the continual meat-offering, and for the continual burnt offering, Num. 28 and 29, the regular sacrifices, both for week-days and for the holidays, **of the Sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin-offerings to make an atonement for Israel,** on the annual Day of Atonement, **and for all the work of the house of our God.** All these expenses were met with the annual tax of the Sanctuary which the people here imposed upon themselves. V. 34. **And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people for the wood-offering,** for large quantities of wood were used for the sacrifices of the Temple, **to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers,** in a certain rotation, **at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord, our God, as it is written in the Law,** Lev. 6, 12; the small number of returned Nethinim making this burden too heavy for them, the work was distributed in this manner and the Feast of Wood-offering thus instituted, which was celebrated on the 14th of Ab (August); v. 35. **and to bring the first-fruits of our ground and the first-fruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the Lord,** Ex. 23, 19; 34, 26; Lev. 19, 23; Deut. 26, 2; v. 36. **also the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the Law,** Ex. 13, 2. 12. 13, a special offering being brought for the release of the first-born sons, Num. 18, 15. 16, **and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God;** v. 37. **and that we should bring the first-fruits of our dough,** of groats, or ground barley, **and our offerings,** the voluntary gifts, **and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine, and of oil unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God,** where there were cells with special receptacles for storing such offerings, **and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites,** Lev. 27, 30; Num. 18, 21, **that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.** V. 38. **And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites take tithes,** the dignity of the priest insuring a peaceful and honest delivery of the tithes, both by the people to the Levites and by the Levites to the Temple; **and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes,** the tenth part of their income being given to the priests, Num. 18, 26—28, **unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure-house,** for in one of the buildings of the Temple area the treasury of the Temple was kept. V. 39. **For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine,** as just produced from the grapes of the year, **and the oil,** the olive-oil, as it came from the presses, **unto the chambers where are the vessels of the Sanctuary,** the Temple goods, **and the priests that minister, and the porters,** in charge of the Temple gates, **and the singers,** in charge of the liturgical part of the Temple worship; **and we will not forsake the house of our God.** It was a vow inspired by ardent devotion and made in all sincerity. The believers of the New Testament, in exercising their Christian liberty, pledge themselves to support the needs of the Church at home and abroad, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world.

CHAPTER 11.

The Population of Jerusalem Increased.

List of the Leading Men. — V. 1. **And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem,** the capital of the province. **The rest of the people also cast lots to bring one of ten,** of the ordinary people, **to dwell in Jerusalem, the Holy City, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.** Nehemiah's purpose was to increase the population of the city, for the inhabitants were too widely scattered inside the walls. Cp. chap. 7, 4. V. 2. **And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem,** namely, those, in addition to the tenth part chosen by lot, who willingly gave up their own homesteads in order to protect the chief city. V. 3. **Now, these are the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem,** the leading men of Judea, a very small part of the vast Persian Empire; **but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel,** the common people as contrasted with the members of the tribe of Levi, **the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants,** a class of people who ranked even below the Nethinim in the service of the Temple. V. 4. **And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah,** members of this tribe: **Athaiah, the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez,** Gen. 38, 29, only a few links in the genealogical chain being mentioned; v. 5. **and Maaseiah, the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni,** a family title leading back to Shelah, the son of Judah, 1 Chron. 9, 5. V. 6. **All the sons,** that is, the descendants, **of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem were four hundred threescore and**

eight valiant men. V. 7. And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu, the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah. V. 8. And after him Gabbai, Sallai, other Benjamite chiefs, nine hundred twenty and eight. V. 9. And Joel, the son of Zichri, was their overseer, a magistrate both over the descendants of Judah and of Benjamin; and Judah, the son of Senuah, was second over the city, rather, was over the second city, the part of the city where Huldah, the prophetess, had formerly lived, 2 Kings 22, 14. V. 10. Of the priests: Jedaiah, the son of Joiarib, Jachin. V. 11. Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, was the ruler of the house of God, an assistant of the high priest, with extensive privileges, Num. 3, 32; 1 Chron. 9, 11; 2 Chron. 19, 11; 31, 13. V. 12. And their brethren that did the work of the house, the relatives of the chiefs of the priests, all engaged in the ministry of the Temple, were eight hundred twenty and two; and Adaiah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah, v. 13. and his brethren, chief of the fathers, this expression belonging to all the head men of the families mentioned in this list, two hundred forty and two; and Amashai, the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, v. 14. and their brethren, mighty men of valor, that is, the relatives of Amashai, an hundred and twenty and eight; and their overseer, their chief or captain, was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men, all his ancestors being remarkable for various reasons. V. 15. Also of the Levites: Shemaiah, the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; v. 16. and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God, all the work which did not concern sacrifices and worship, especially the collecting of provisions and the paying of bills. V. 17. And Mattaniah, the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, the choirmaster of the Temple chorus in the liturgy of the Temple services; and Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren, and Abda, the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, member of an ancient musicians' family and therefore well able to lead in thanksgiving and prayer. V. 18. All the Levites in the Holy City were two hundred fourscore and four. V. 19. Moreover, the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, in charge of the various entrances to the Temple, were an hundred seventy and two. These were permanent residents of Jerusalem, because they were always on duty at the Temple. Like these people, all those engaged in the work of the Church should always be mindful of the great honor which is theirs by virtue of their position.

DISTRIBUTION OF OTHER JEWS. — V. 20. And the residue of Israel, of the priests, and the Levites were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance, on the land occupied by his ancestors before the exile or in the city where they had lived. V. 21. But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel, on the southern slope of the Temple mount; and Ziha and Gispa were over the Nethinim. V. 22. The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph the singers were over the business of the house of God, that is, some of the sons of Asaph, the family of Temple singers, were in charge of things which were needed for the interior of the Temple and its services, also the gifts for their maintenance. V. 23. For it was the king's commandment concerning them that a certain portion should be for singers, due for every day. Since these men were on duty every day in the liturgical part of the Temple services, they had to be supported entirely by the gifts of the people, and therefore the Persian monarch had so ordered. V. 24. And Pethahiah, the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah, the son of Judah, this family usually known as the Zarhites, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people, the Persian king's special agent, probably in adjusting civil cases or in regulating financial matters. V. 25. And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba and in the villages thereof, that is, in Hebron, some twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem, and at Dibon and in the villages thereof, not far from Hebron, and at Jekabzeel and in the villages thereof, v. 26. and at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet, v. 27. and at Hazar-shual, and at Beersheba, on the extreme southern boundary, and in the villages thereof, v. 28. and at Ziklag, toward the west, and at Mekonah and in the villages thereof, v. 29. and at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth, v. 30. Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, on the Philistine frontier, at Lachish, formerly a Philistine city, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof. Many of these towns, which were rebuilt at this time, are mentioned in Josh. 15. And they dwelt from Beersheba, almost on the Egyptian frontier, unto the Valley of Hinnom, southwest of Jerusalem, the entire distance being

about fifty miles. V. 31. **The children also of Benjamin from Geba dwelt at Michmash,** rather, from Geba to Michmash, **and Aija, and Bethel, and in their villages,** these towns being located in the ancient territory of the tribe, north and northwest of Jerusalem, v. 32. **and at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,** v. 33. **Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,** v. 34. **Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,** v. 35. **Lod, and Ono, the Valley of Craftsmen,** apparently in the vicinity of Lydda, on the edge of the Plain of Sharon. V. 36. **And of the Levites were divisions in Judah and in Benjamin,** that is, those who were not residents of Jerusalem had definite cities assigned them in the territory of these former tribes, or some Levites were transferred from stations in Judah to cities of Benjamin. Thus the children of Israel, although under the jurisdiction of the Persian monarch, were able to serve their God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Religious liberty is a special blessing of God, and all Christians should appreciate it, enjoying it with hearts full of grateful praise and with willing hands. Note also that it was God's purpose to keep Israel in its isolated position until Messiah would come, for salvation was of the Jews.

CHAPTER 12.

Lists of Priests and Levites. The Dedication of the Walls.

Priests and Levites who Came Up with Zerubbabel. — V. 1. **Now, these are the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua,** in the preceding century, the names being taken from ancient records: **Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,** v. 2. **Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,** v. 3. **Schechaniah** (or Shebaniah), **Rehum** (or Harim), **Meremoth** (or Meraioth), v. 4. **Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah,** v. 5. **Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,** v. 6. **Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah,** v. 7. **Sallu** (or Sallai), **Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These were the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua,** the heads of the courses which remained of the twenty-four into which the priesthood was divided at the time of David, 1 Chron. 24, 1—20. The four courses which had returned from the captivity had either been increased by later additions or had been subdivided, those not appearing in the list being such as had become extinct during the exile. No significance should be attached to the names, since the identity with those of a later day is often accidental. V. 8. **Moreover, the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, which was over the thanksgiving,** the choirmaster, or the leader in striking up the psalms of thanksgiving, as sung in the Temple services, **he and his brethren.** V. 9. **Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, were over against them in the watches,** either stationed opposite them in the Temple or alternating with them in the office of guarding the Temple entrances. V. 10. **And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada,** v. 11. **and Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.** V. 12. **And in the days of Joiakim,** who was high priest at the time when Nehemiah was governor, **were priests, the chief of the fathers,** the heads of the priestly courses: **of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;** v. 13. **of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;** v. 14. **of Melicu,** called Malluch above, **Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph;** v. 15. **of Harim,** called Rehum above, **Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;** v. 16. **of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam;** v. 17. **of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai;** v. 18. **of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;** v. 19. **and of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;** v. 20. **of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;** v. 21. **of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.** It seems, then, that the course of Hattush became extinct, and that the name of the representative of Miniamin has dropped out. V. 22. **The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan** (called Jonathan above), **and Jaddua were recorded chief of the fathers,** they were entered into the registers under the names of their chiefs until the time of Alexander the Great; **also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.** V. 23. **The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the chronicles,** the public registers in which the genealogical lists were kept, **even until the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib.** V. 24. **And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua, the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them,** leaders of the singers among the Levites, **to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David, the man of God,** 1 Chron. 23 to 26, **ward over against ward,** as in verse 9. V. 25. **Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters,** although the names of some singers are included, **keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates,** at the chambers for storage attached to the various gates, where the people could immediately deposit their gifts. V. 26. **These were in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak,** that is, when Jehoiakim was high priest, **and in the days of Nehemiah, the governor, and of Ezra, the priest, the scribe.** To hold office as priest or Levite it was necessary that a man

could prove his descent from Levi. At the present time the call of the congregation is necessary in order that a man may officiate as preacher or teacher.

THE WALLS DEDICATED. — V. 27. **And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem,** at the formal celebration following its completion, **they sought the Levites out of all their places,** since they were scattered throughout the province, chap. 11, 20. 36, **to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps,** with psalms of praise accompanied by instruments, as used in the Temple orchestra. V. 28. **And the sons of the singers,** the guild, or company, of singers as taken from the Levitical families, **gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem,** that is, from the surrounding villages, **and from the villages of Netophathi,** a town near Bethlehem, where the singers seem to have settled; v. 29. **also from the house of Gilgal,** Beth-gilgal, also near Bethlehem, **and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth,** both of these towns apparently north of Jerusalem; **for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem,** within easy walking distance of the capital. V. 30. **And the priests and the Levites purified themselves and purified the people and the gates and the wall,** most likely by a series of prescribed sacrifices and such other ceremonies as the Law and custom demanded. V. 31. **Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks,** literally, "two great thanksgivings," **whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall,** starting out from the Valley Gate and headed by the one company of singers, **toward the Dung Gate,** to the south; v. 32. **and after them went Hoshaiah and half of the princes of Judah,** as Nehemiah had arranged the procession, v. 33. **and Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam,** v. 34. **Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,** v. 35. **and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets,** the blowing of which was a special priestly privilege; **namely, Zechariah, the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph;** v. 36. **and his brethren: Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David, the man of God,** those chosen and invented by David for the Temple orchestra, **and Ezra, the scribe, before them.** Thus the procession went to the south and then turned to the east. V. 37. **And at the Fountain Gate, which was over against them,** near the Pool of Siloam, **they went up by the stairs of the City of David,** leaving the wall at the Tower of Siloam, **at the going up of the wall, above the house of David,** ascending the stairs where the wall loomed up above the house of David, **even unto the Water Gate eastward,** which seems to have been a gate in the inner wall. This company had thus passed along and viewed the entire southern half of the city wall. V. 38. **And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them,** starting out in the opposite direction from the Valley Gate, or that of Jaffa, **and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces,** that is, past this tower, **even unto the Bread Wall,** beyond the corner gate on the northwest; v. 39. **and from above the Gate of Ephraim,** near the northwestern corner of the city, **and above the old gate,** almost at the northeastern corner, **and above the Fish Gate,** in the eastern wall, north of the Temple mount, **and the Tower of Hananeel, and the Tower of Meah,** these two structures bearing the names of their builders, **even unto the Sheep Gate,** which was in the eastern wall, near the Temple; **and they stood still in the Prison Gate,** the high gate at the end of the inner wall, to which point the other company had progressed, at the bridge spanning the Tyropoeon Valley. V. 40. **So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I and the half of the rulers with me;** v. 41. **and the priests: Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets;** v. 42. **and Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah, their overseer,** the leader of the chorus. V. 43. **Also that day they offered great sacrifices,** thank-offerings combined with a great sacrificial feast, **and rejoiced; for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the wives also and the children rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem,** the shouting and singing and the reports of the glad rejoicing, **was heard even afar off.** All the services of the Christians express the joy of their hearts over the salvation in Jesus Christ and over the many blessings which the Lord gives them even here in time.

CERTAIN OFFICERS APPOINTED. — V. 44. **And at that time,** at the Festival of the Dedication, **were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures,** the cells or rooms where the gifts to the Temple were stored, **for the offerings, for the first-fruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities,** the tilled ground surrounding the various towns, **the portions of the Law,** the delivery of which the Law required, **for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the**

Levites that waited, the joy of the people evidenced itself also in their willingness to care properly for the ministers of the Lord who stood at their posts, performing their tasks as commanded by God. V. 45. **And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God,** performing their appointed duties, **and the ward of their purification,** attending also to the duties of purifying, **according to the commandment of David and of Solomon, his son,** 1 Chron. 25 and 26. V. 46. **For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers,** 2 Chron. 29, 30, **and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God,** and the purpose of Nehemiah was to restore the entire Temple service to its original beauty and completeness. V. 47. **And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the portions of the singers and the porters,** the dues intended for their maintenance, **every day his portion; and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites,** brought in their consecrated or dedicated gifts; **and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron,** the priests, the Levites turning over to the priests the tithe of the gifts which were dedicated to them and entrusted to their care. It augurs well for the work of the Church if all its members rejoice for the Lord's ministers and willingly take upon them the maintenance of the servants of the Word. The sacrifice of the lips is well-pleasing to the Lord only when supported by the sacrifice of the hands.

CHAPTER 13.

Various Abuses Corrected.

In the Temple and Its Services. — V. 1. **On that day,** namely, the day of the dedication of the walls, **they read in the Book of Moses in the audience of the people,** evidently the Book of Deuteronomy, chap. 7, 1—6; 23, 3—8; **and therein was found written that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God forever,** neither by being made a part of the Jewish nation nor by entering into its organization through marriage; to be exact, no Moabite or Ammonite family could be admitted to the privileges of the Jewish Church until in the tenth generation after quitting heathenism and formally declaring its adherence to the Jewish religion; v. 2. **because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them that he should curse them,** Num. 22, 5; **howbeit, our God turned the curse into a blessing,** Num. 23, 11; 24, 10. V. 3. **Now, it came to pass, when they had heard the Law,** this particular passage, **that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude,** excluding all the children of mixed marriages from the congregation by authority of the divine Law. At this point of the narrative there seems to be a gap of about twelve years. V. 4. **And before this,** rather, in the face of all this, in spite of the reforms instituted by Nehemiah at the time of his first sojourn in Jerusalem, **Eliashib, the priest,** the successor of Jehoiakim, **having the oversight of the chamber of the house of God,** as the high priest of the Jews, **was allied unto Tobiah,** contracting a family relation with this enemy of the Jews by marriage; v. 5. **and he had prepared for him a great chamber,** where Tobiah could reside when visiting Jerusalem, **where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn** (grain), **the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites and the singers and the porters, and the offerings of the priests.** So Eliashib had calmly converted a number of cells of the Temple which had been designated for unbloody sacrificial offerings and tithes into a dwelling for this stranger and enemy of the Jews. Note that the Levites, whose duty it was to assist in the sacrifices, are distinguished from the priests on the one hand and from the singers and porters on the other. V. 6. **But in all this time,** while this desecration took place, **was not I at Jerusalem; for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon,** about twelve years after his first trip to Jerusalem, **came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king,** his earnest request to return to Jerusalem for a second time was granted; v. 7. **and I came to Jerusalem and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah,** the abuses which he had introduced in Nehemiah's absence, **in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God,** providing living quarters for his relative within the precincts of the Temple. V. 8. **And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber,** much as our Lord later cleansed the Temple courts of the venders and money-changers. V. 9. **Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers; and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God with the meat-offering and the frankincense.** V. 10. **And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them,** a fact which had probably furnished Eliashib with an excuse to appropriate the storage-cells for the use to which he had put them; **for the Levites and the singers, including the porters, that did the work, were fled every one to his field,** compelled to leave their posts in order to provide for the maintenance of themselves and their

families. V. 11. **Then contended I with the rulers and said, Why is the house of God forsaken?** The enthusiasm shown at the dedication of the walls had been replaced by an utter apathy, which permitted a total neglect of the Temple worship. The reproof was directed to the priests to whom the management of the Temple and its services had been committed, who should have opposed the course of Eliashib with all emphasis. **And I gathered them,** the Levites, **and set them in their place,** giving them back the positions which they formerly held. V. 12. **Then brought all Judah,** all the members of the Jewish Church, **the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries,** the storehouses of the Temple, as they had pledged themselves to do. V. 13. **And I made treasurers over the treasuries,** placed men in charge of the storehouses: **Shelemiah, the priest, and Zadok, the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah,** these men being responsible for the Temple stores of offerings and tithes; **and next to them was Hanan, the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were counted faithful,** a very necessary virtue in this position, **and their office was to distribute unto their brethren.** V. 14. **Remember me, O my God, concerning this and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for the offices thereof,** for everything that was required to be observed in connection with the Temple worship. This was not a prayer of self-glorification, but a testimony of God's grace in the life of Nehemiah, and every believer may not only rightly boast of the possession of such grace, but also rejoice over it after the manner of Nehemiah.

THE SABBATH RESTORED. — V. 15. **In those days,** immediately after his return to Jerusalem, **saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in sheaves and lading asses,** performing all the usual farm-work on the Sabbath; **as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day,** produce being brought to the capital, as during the week, all of which was strictly out of harmony with the Jewish civil law. **And I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.** V. 16. **There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah and in Jerusalem,** plying their trade in direct violation of God's command to the Jews. V. 17. **Then I contended with the nobles of Judah,** the members of the higher classes of the province in general, **and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day?** V. 18. **Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.** Cp. Jer. 17, 20—27. V. 19. **And it came to pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath,** about the time just before sunset, for the Sabbath of the Jews began with sundown, **I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath. And some of my servants set I at the gates,** giving them instructions to watch, **that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath-day.** V. 20. **So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice,** apparently putting up booths outside the gates and endeavoring to do business in spite of Nehemiah's protest. V. 21. **Then I testified against them and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall?** Their very presence near the gates was a menace to the spirit of the Law, if not to its letter. **If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you,** use violent measures to drive them away. **From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath.** The energetic method of Nehemiah broke up the traffic. V. 22. **And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves,** from any Levitical impurities which they might have contracted during their absence from the city, **and that they should come and keep the gates,** guarding the city against any further violation of the Sabbath law, **to sanctify the Sabbath-day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Thy mercy.** The example of Nehemiah may be followed in our days if the leaders of the Church and all Christians show the proper zeal for the sanctifying of the Word of God, in urging the people to hold preaching and the Gospel sacred, and gladly to hear and learn it.

INTERMARRIAGES FORBIDDEN. — V. 23. **In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod,** women of the Philistines, **of Ammon, and of Moab,** the reforms of Ezra having been set aside; v. 24. **and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod,** a sort of mongrel dialect, with corresponding habits learned from their heathen mothers, **and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.** V. 25. **And I contended with them,** chiding them not as a private person, but in his capacity as governor of the province, **and cursed them and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair,** attacking them in their bodies for their disregard of the Law, **and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons or for yourselves.** V. 26. **Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by these things?** Cp. 1 Kings 11, 1. **Yet among many nations was there**

no king like him, who was beloved of his God, 2 Sam. 12, 24, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless, even him did outlandish women cause to sin, 1 Kings 11, 4, the conclusion being that ordinary people would be led into misbelief and idolatry all the sooner. V. 27. **Shall we, then, hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?** The inference was, of course, that their bad example would lead others into the same sin. V. 28. **And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib, the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite,** one of the implacable enemies of the Jews; **therefore I chased him from me,** forcing him to leave Jerusalem, so that he could no longer derive his support from the treasury of the priests. V. 29. **Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood,** Deut. 33, 8—11; Lev. 21, 6—8, **and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites,** bringing disgrace upon their office and setting a bad example for others. V. 30. **Thus cleansed I them from all strangers,** by separating the mixed population from the Jews of pure blood, **and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business,** restoring the ancient worship in all its parts; v. 31. **and for the wood-offering, at times appointed,** chap. 10, 34, **and for the first-fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good!** It is the Lord who rewards His faithful servants if they are zealous for His honor and truth and consistently oppose all godless, worldly innovations.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Esther takes its name from the chief character of the story it relates, the Jewish maiden Esther (Star or Young Woman), also known as Hadassah (Myrtle, Bride). Having been reared as the foster-daughter of Mordecai, one of the Jews who had remained in Babylon after the return of the first exiles to the city of their fathers, Esther was elevated to the dignity of queen of the Persian Empire, after Ahasuerus, or Xerxes, had found it necessary to repudiate Vashti, the first queen, for open insubordination. In her position as queen, Esther was used by the Lord as His instrument in foiling the murderous schemes of the wicked Haman and in delivering the Jewish people from extermination at the hand of their enemies. The Book of Esther therefore not only relates the wonderful deliverance of God's chosen people, from whom the Messiah was to come, but also explains the origin of the Feast of Purim (Feast of Lots), as it was afterward observed in the Jewish Church.

Although, as the careful reader will notice, the name of God does not occur in the book, yet the providence of God is set forth in every chapter, on every page. The Ahasuerus of the story is undoubtedly the Persian King Xerxes (485—465 B. C.). The author of the book is not known; scholars mention both Mordecai and Ezra as probable writers. From the entire book itself and all its exact data it appears that it was written soon after the events had transpired which are related there, probably about the middle of the fifth century before Christ. It may readily be divided into three sections, namely, that which tells how Esther became queen, that which relates the rise of Haman and his murderous plot against the Jews, and that which gives an account of the deliverance of the Jews.[1])

1) Cp. Fuerbringer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 41—43; *Concordia Bible Class*, April, 1919, 52. 53.

CHAPTER 1.

The Feast of Ahasuerus and the Repudiation of Vashti.

The King's Banquet. — V. 1. **Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus,** the great Persian king known in secular history as Xerxes, **(this is Ahasuerus which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia,** over a large part of Asia and the northeastern part of Africa, **over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces,** the larger divisions of the empire, known as satrapies, being, in turn, divided into smaller sections,) v. 2. **that in those days, when the King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom,** the Persian monarchs always being pictured as sitting on a throne under a lofty canopy, **which was in Shushan,** the palace, his favorite winter and spring residence, in the eastern part of the Assyrian Plain, v. 3. **in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his**

princes and his servants, a banquet on a magnificent scale and extending over a number of days, the power of Persia and Media, his most important military officers, especially those of his body-guard, the nobles and princes of the provinces, at least those of the twenty satrapies, and probably those of all the provinces included in his domain, being before him; v. 4. when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, displayed all the resources of his might, and the honor of his excellent majesty, the extent of his influence and power, many days, even an hundred and fourscore days. During this time of prolonged entertainment the king took the opportunity to bind his subordinates to him in closer allegiance and to consult with them concerning measures he hoped to carry into effect. V. 5. And when these days were expired, all the princes and rulers having been gained for his plans, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan, the palace, the inhabitants in general, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace, in the great park surrounding the royal palace, the remains of which have been excavated; v. 6. where were white, green, and blue hangings, exquisite and costly tapestries of the finest linen and glistening, hyacinth-colored fabric, white and blue being the royal Persian colors, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble, these curtains thus admitting both light and warmth and being altogether in keeping with the climate of Shushan; the beds, that is, the sofas on which the guests reclined, were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble, altogether a magnificent setting. V. 7. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold (the vessels being diverse one from another, a fact which increased their costliness) and royal wine in abundance, gotten from the royal vineyards and vaults, according to the state of the king, the great quantity dispensed doing honor to the wealth and bounty of the king. V. 8. And the drinking was according to the law, as the etiquette of the Persian court demanded; none did compel, there was no need of urging, all being ready to show their appreciation of the king's bounty; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house that they should do according to every man's pleasure, all the guests being put at their ease and enjoying the hospitality of the king. The contrast between all this pomp and glory and the present desolation of that country shows the vanity of all earthly riches and power.

VASHTI'S INSUBORDINATION AND ITS PUNISHMENT. — V. 9. Also Vashti, the queen, made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus, in her own apartments of the palace, for according to Oriental custom the sexes did not mingle at the banquet and feast. V. 10. On the seventh day, the last day of the feast, the climax of the banqueting, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, drunkenly happy with the excess of revelry, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, the eunuchs who usually transmitted the king's orders to the queen's apartments, v. 11. to bring Vashti, the queen, before the king with the crown royal, in full regal apparel, including the high, pointed turban distinctive of her rank, but evidently without her veil, to show the people and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on, beautiful of countenance, and Xerxes was very proud of her beauty, as reflecting credit also upon himself. V. 12. But the Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains; therefore was the king very wroth, all the more because her refusal of obedience happened upon this state occasion, and his anger burned in him, since his authority both as husband and as king had been set aside. V. 13. Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, the astrologers and magicians of the Persian court, who were also his advisers, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment, he followed this course of getting expert advice in all his undertakings; v. 14. and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom, being his ministers or the members of his cabinet,) v. 15. What shall we do unto the Queen Vashti according to law because she hath not performed the commandment of the King Ahasuerus by the chamberlains? Her refusal had, accordingly, been absolute, not qualified. V. 16. And Memucan, undoubtedly after a consultation of the counselors, answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, her flat disobedience setting aside his authority as husband and king, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus. V. 17. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti, the queen, to be brought in before him, but she came not. They feared the consequences of the queen's evil example. V. 18. Likewise shall the

ladies of Persia and Media, the wives of the nobles, say this day unto all the king's princes which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath, literally, "in sufficient amounts," that is, more than enough to suit us. V. 19. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, a special order, or decree, with special reference to this occurrence, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, having the legal authority that such decrees had in the Persian Empire, That Vashti come no more before King Ahasuerus, being deposed entirely from her royal dignity; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. V. 20. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honor, both to great and small, the harsh measures adopted would have this effect of strengthening the authority of the husbands. V. 21. And the saying pleased the king and the princes. And the king did according to the word of Memucan; v. 22. for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, in its own script or characters, and to every people after their language, this feature of communicating with all conquered nations in their own language being found in Persia at that time, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people, the language of the husband being given the preference in the home. This was, in view of the circumstances, not an idle and superfluous, but probably an ineffectual protest against a real and growing evil. So far as Christian households are concerned, the position of the husband over against his wife is not one of absolute authority, but of headship, with the example of Christ held before all spouses at all times, Eph. 5, 20; Col. 3, 18; 1 Tim. 2, 11—15.

CHAPTER 2.

Esther Made Queen.

The Choice of Virgins for the Position of Queen. — V. 1. After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was appeased, when the excitement attending the banquet and the affair of the queen's insubordination had subsided, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her, his brooding over the matter tending to make him melancholy and causing the king's counselors to suggest a course of procedure to him and to divert a threatening danger. V. 2. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king, the requirements being youth, beauty, and virginity; v. 3. and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, a matter easy to perform with the extensive Persian post system, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan, the palace, to the house of the women, the apartments set apart for the royal harem, unto the custody of Hege (or Hegai), the king's chamberlain, the chief eunuch, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them, which, including cleansing and anointing with precious oils and perfumes, extended over some time; v. 4. and let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing, the suggestion as made, pleased the king; and he did so. V. 5. Now, in Shushan, the palace, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, of the lineage of King Saul, apparently holding some office in the court of the Persian king, v. 6. who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah (or Jehoiachin), king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away, that is, his house had been carried into exile at that time, about 130 years before, Mordecai himself having been born in Babylonia. V. 7. And he brought up, nourished and reared, Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter; although her cousin, he became her foster-father and guardian, since he was evidently very much older than she; for she had neither father nor mother, she was a full orphan, and the maid was fair and beautiful, both in face and form; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter, taking the place of a full parent toward her. V. 8. So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, that concerning the selection of virgins for the position of queen, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan, the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women, especially the virgins included in this experiment. V. 9. And the maiden pleased him, she immediately gained the good will of this chief eunuch, and she obtained kindness of him, found grace and favor before him; and he speedily gave

her her things for purification, all the cosmetics required to enhance her beauty, with such things as belonged to her, especially portions of wholesome food, for a good diet was very essential for the purpose of the king, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house, as her servants and companions; and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women, assigned the best apartments to her and her slave-girls. V. 10. Esther had not showed her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai, with a shrewdness which had the advantages of Esther in mind at all times, had charged her that she should not show it, she should not reveal her nationality. V. 11. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, as near the royal harem as he dared to go, to know how Esther did and what should become of her, ever solicitous of her welfare. V. 12. Now, when every maid's turn was come to go in to King Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, as custom and etiquette demanded, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, this massaging intended for the purpose of bringing out suppleness and grace, and six months with sweet odors, with the perfumes which the Orientals delight in, and with other things for the purifying of the women,) v. 13. then thus came every maiden unto the king, fully prepared and ornamented to gain the king's pleasure; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house, and many had taken the opportunity to bedeck themselves with every possible ornament in order to attain to the position of queen. V. 14. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, the harem of the concubines, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, the eunuch in charge of these apartments, which kept the concubines; she came in unto the king no more except the king delighted in her and that she were called by name. In the entire narrative the vanity and nothingness of this world's goods, also of mere physical beauty, is brought out with great impressiveness. A fair face alone will not bring lasting happiness.

ESTHER CHOSEN QUEEN. —V. 15. Now, when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai, the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed, she called for no excessive cosmetics or jewelry, for she had no desire to practise any blandishments upon the king. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her, for modesty is the brightest jewel of female beauty. V. 16. So Esther was taken unto King Ahasuerus, into his house royal, into the king's apartments, in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, about four years after the degradation of Vashti, and after Xerxes had returned from his unsuccessful expedition against the Greeks. V. 17. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, he chose her above all her competitors, who were retained merely as secondary wives, so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti, formally and officially elevated her to that position. V. 18. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast, in honor of the queen, to celebrate his marriage; and he made a release to the provinces, he relieved them from certain obligations, probably in the line of taxes, and gave gifts according to the state of the king, in agreement with his wealth and his bounty. V. 19. And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, this having reference to the time before Esther's marriage, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate, in his capacity as official of the court. V. 20. Esther had not yet showed her kindred nor her people, had not divulged her nationality, as Mordecai had charged her; for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai like as when she was brought up with him, since the Fourth Commandment applies to the relation to guardians also. V. 21. In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, guardians of the threshold, watchmen of the palace, were wroth and sought to lay hand on the King Ahasuerus, they planned his assassination. V. 22. And the thing was known to Mordecai, he got hold of the information in some way, as Josephus states, through the Jewish slave of one of the conspirators, who told it unto Esther, the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof, giving him the information concerning the plot, in Mordecai's name. V. 23. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out, the charge was found to be true; therefore they were both hanged on a tree, either hanged on a stake or impaled; and it was written in the book of the chronicles, the royal annals, before the king, deposited in the royal archives after being recorded in his presence. Apparently small and insignificant things, which are nevertheless guided by the hand of God, have often had a deciding influence upon the welfare of the Church of God.

CHAPTER 3.

Haman's Promotion and Attempt to Destroy the Jews.

Haman Plans Revenge against Mordecai. V. 1. **After these things**, some four years after the elevation of Esther to the position of queen, **did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite**, making him a great man in the empire, **and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him**, by raising him to the rank of grand vizier, his chief confidential minister. V. 2. **And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate**, the lower officers of the court, **bowed and reverenced Haman**, giving him kingly and therefore divine honor, after the Persian custom; **for the king had so commanded concerning him.** Ahasuerus claimed divine honor and reverence for himself, and he now commanded that his prime minister be regarded in the same way. **But Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence**, since he, as a Jew, refused to give divine honors to any one but the Lord Himself. V. 3. **Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate**, the fellow-officers of Mordecai, **said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?** It displeased them that Mordecai refused to give Haman the homage which they had to show. V. 4. **Now, it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand**, whether he would succeed in upholding the principle which he alleged in explanation of his action; **for he had told them that he was a Jew**, wherefore he could not give divine homage to Haman, especially since the latter was an Amalekite, a race accursed and condemned by God, Ex. 17, 15; 1 Sam. 15. V. 5. **And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath**, regarding this refusal, according to Persian ideas, as the greatest insult which could have been offered him. V. 6. **And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone**, revenge on this one man alone seemed too insignificant a matter to him; **for they had showed him the people of Mordecai**, the despised race of the Jews; **wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.** By exterminating the entire race of the Jews, a proceeding by no means without a precedent in the history of the cruel and revengeful Orientals, he not only wanted to express his contempt of the Jews in an adequate manner, but he also intended to prevent any further display of contempt on their part. V. 7. **In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day and from month to month**, the court astrologers and magicians being entrusted with this work of determining which day and month would be the most auspicious for carrying out Haman's murderous design, **to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar**, for Haman, with a zeal and persistence worthy of a better cause, determined that all signs must be favorable for the execution of his plan. The text is evidently to be understood in such a way that Haman, in the first month of the Jewish year, caused the lot to be cast, first for the month of the coming year in which he intended to have his revenge, and then for the day of the month which would be auspicious for his scheme. The fact that the last month of the Jewish year was chosen by lot gave him ample time to prepare his plans. Thus the enemies of the Church, Satan and the world, are always busy with schemes of destruction, which God, however, can easily frustrate at His own time.

The Plot to Destroy the Jews. — V. 8. **And Haman**, still enjoying the king's favor to the full, **said unto King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom**, skilfully insinuating that the Jews were aliens in manners and habits and enemies to the rest of his subjects; **and their laws are diverse from all people**, the implication being that they were at variance with the laws of the realm, that the Jews were no good citizens; **neither keep they the king's laws**, for Haman falsely generalized from the one instance in which his dignity was offended; **therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them**, to leave them in peace, unmolested, Haman's suggestion being that the king's person and the royal honor were in danger. V. 9. **If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed**, as the Scythians had been massacred about a century before; **and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business to bring it into the king's treasuries**, this immense sum of some twenty million dollars being intended both to arouse the king's cupidity and to compensate him for any loss in revenue due to the destruction of so many of his citizens. Haman had planned with great shrewdness. V. 10. **And the king**, carried away with pleasure by the clever proposition of Haman, **took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the Jews' enemy**, this being a token not only of intimate friendship, but also of royal authority to issue decrees and to imprint upon them the royal signet. V. 11. **And the king said unto Ha-**

man, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. He was given a free hand to do as he had planned. V. 12. Then were the king's scribes called, the secretaries who were always in attendance upon him, on the thirteenth day of the first month, for Haman lost no time after deciding upon his plans, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, the satraps of the empire, and to the governors that were over every province, the smaller divisions of the satrapies, and to the rulers of every people of every province, the native-born princes who were still considered the nominal heads, according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, for it was the policy of the Persian empire to publish all decrees in all the languages of the conquered nations; in the name of King Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. V. 13. And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, for the system of royal posts by means of runners along the military highways was highly developed in Persia, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, the last being intended for a bait, in order to arouse the covetousness of the people, who may not have been opposed to the Jews. The form of the sentence shows that it was taken from a legal document, a faithful copy of the murderous decree. V. 14. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people that they should be ready against that day. The edict was to be proclaimed and posted in public everywhere, in order to work up the people to the proper pitch of deadly hate and to effect the extermination of all Jews. V. 15. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan, the palace, issued from this residence of the king. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, to indulge in sensual enjoyments without giving their cruelty a further thought; but the city Shushan was perplexed, the inhabitants being unable to explain to themselves the terrible and cruel decree of the king, which was bound to rend the homes and the hearts of thousands of his subjects. The enemies of the Church have more than once decreed its destruction and laid their plans accordingly, meanwhile living in a false security; but they failed to take into consideration the almighty power of God.

CHAPTER 4.

Mordecai Plans to Deliver the Jews.

THE MOURNING OF THE JEWS. — V. 1. When Mordecai perceived, found out about, all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, in token of his deep grief, and put on sackcloth, a garment of haircloth next to his skin, with ashes, which he strewed over his head and clothing, and went out into the midst of the city, openly in the streets, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry, concealing his deep distress from no one, but rather proclaiming it publicly; v. 2. and came even before the king's gate, to the open place before the royal palace; for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth, while bearing the dress and the disfigurements of mourning. V. 3. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing, for according to the decree of the king there seemed to be no escape from the threatened doom; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes, for they felt just as Mordecai did. V. 4. So Esther's maids and her chamberlains, the eunuchs in charge of the royal harem, came and told it her, they brought her the news, Mordecai's behavior, with which he had purposely drawn attention to himself, probably suggesting to them that he desired them to do so. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved, filled with great anxiety, although her nationality had not yet been revealed in the palace; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, proper clothes, in which he might enter the palace grounds, and to take away his sackcloth from him; but he received it not, chiefly because he wanted to communicate with her in private, lest she divulge her secret. V. 5. Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, a eunuch set apart for her service alone, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai to know what it was and why it was, she wanted detailed information explaining his strange behavior. V. 6. So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city which was before the king's gate. V. 7. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, the entire plan of Haman with its motive, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews to destroy them, emphasizing this despicable sordidness in order to arouse the indignation of Esther all the more. V. 8. Also, he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, as it was posted

in the city, to show it unto Esther and to declare it unto her, give her an explanation of its import and significance, **and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people,** to entreat or petition relief and deliverance for her people, if necessary, by revealing her nationality. Mordecai's plan depended upon the depth of the king's fondness for Esther, of which he felt sure. V. 9. **And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.** It is in times of great distress and anxiety that the believers turn to the Lord with sighing and entreaty, begging Him for deliverance from all their enemies. And the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much.

Esther Agrees to Mordecai's Plan. — V. 10. **Again Esther spake unto Hatach and gave him commandment unto Mordecai,** v. 11. **All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court,** that part of the courtyard adjoining the king's apartments and the throne-room, **who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter,** the long tapering staff, the symbol of royal authority, **that he may live. But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days;** she feared that the king had become indifferent to her, and that any attempt to approach his throne without his express invitation might change his indifference into dislike, so that the venture would cost her her life. The Persian law required that all business was to be brought to the attention of the king through his ministers, including all petitions, and Esther interpreted the law to mean that, unless called and therefore also acceptable to the king, she dared not approach his throne except at the risk of her life, in spite of the fact that she was his favorite wife and officially recognized as queen. V. 12. **And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.** V. 13. **Then Mordecai,** bound to remove Esther's hesitation, since it would absolutely hinder the success of his plan, **commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house,** merely by virtue of her position in the king's palace, as queen of the empire, **more than all the Jews.** V. 14. **For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time,** not making an attempt to intercede in behalf of the people of her race, **then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place,** for Mordecai confidently believed that the Lord would provide a way to deliver the Jews from the impending destruction, so that they would be able once more to breathe freely; **but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed,** being overtaken by the punishment of God for the negligence exhibited in this crisis. **And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom,** holding the position of queen, **for such a time as this?** Mordecai firmly believed that it was the providence of God which had placed Esther in the position she occupied at this time, for the purpose of effecting a deliverance of God's people. V. 15. **Then Esther,** overcome by this appeal, **bade them return Mordecai this answer,** v. 16. **Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day,** a very severe fast, accompanied with urgent prayer to God to give success to the plan suggested by Mordecai. **I also and my maidens,** her servants-in-waiting, who may have been Jewish girls gradually introduced by Esther, **will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law,** not legally allowed; **and if I perish, I perish.** Thus she expressed her willing submission to the fate which might be in store for her if she performed what she now considered her duty, the risk being all the greater since she would not only approach the king's throne unannounced, but also intended asking a favor of him which involved the recall of a royal edict and an interference in the business of the empire. V. 17. **So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.** Note: It is altogether permissible for any person who enjoys the favor of the mighty ones of this world to make use of this factor in counteracting the evil plans of the enemies of the Church. Also: Every important matter in the Church should be begun with, and accompanied by, prayer.

CHAPTER 5.

Esther Appears before the King.

Esther's Invitation to the King. — V. 1. **Now, it came to pass on the third day,** namely, after her interview with Mordecai, when she charged that a fast be made in her behalf, chap. 4, 15—17, **that Esther put on her royal apparel,** in order the more readily to gain the king's good will, **and stood,** took her position, remained standing, **in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house,** before the large door which led to the throne-room, through whose opening the king could see every one who approached. **And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house,** in a direct line with

the doorway, a position which had various advantages. V. 2. **And it was so, when the king saw Esther, the queen, standing in the court,** the raised seat which he occupied enabling him to see over the heads of his attendants, **that she obtained favor in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand,** the slender rod which was the symbol of kingly authority and the holding out of which signified the gracious acceptance of the petitioner, chap. 4, 11. **So Esther drew near and touched the top of the scepter,** probably also kissing it, as tradition has it, in acknowledging the favor of the king and in expression of her submission to his royal authority. V. 3. **Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther?** The Hebrew words are rendered more exactly by the phrase, What is the matter, Esther, the queen? **And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.** Far from having become indifferent toward her, his regard for her had rather been stimulated anew by her appearance, so that he was ready to show himself most liberal toward her. V. 4. **And Esther,** whose shrewd caution warned her not to presume upon the first impression made upon the king, **answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.** Here again the consideration which Esther seemed to show for the king's favorite served to strengthen his regard for her and to increase his anxiety to serve her. V. 5. **Then the king said,** making Esther's petition a command addressed to Haman, **Cause Haman to make haste that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared,** being her guests in her own private apartments. V. 6. **And the king,** feeling that there was something very important that Esther wished to discuss with him and request of him, **said unto Esther at the banquet of wine,** when they had reached that part of the feast where drinking was the chief thing, and when their hearts were merry, **What is thy petition? And it shall be granted thee. And what is thy request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed,** thus reasserting the promise given in the morning. V. 7. **Then answered Esther and said, My petition and my request is:** v. 8. **If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said,** state the request weighing upon her mind. It was either that Esther lacked courage at the crucial moment, or that she did not feel quite sure enough of her position on the first day. The fact that one bravely confesses his position and conviction does not exclude the application of prudence. It is the matter of wisdom to ascertain in what frame of mind our neighbor may be, lest unfavorable circumstances prevent the proper effect of our confession.

HAMAN'S FATUOUS SECURITY. — V. 9. **Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart,** puffed up because of the supposed distinction shown him by the queen; **but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate,** where he had again taken up his position, **that he stood not up nor moved for him,** still refusing to give him the deference which he expected from all lower officers, chap. 3, 2, **he was full of indignation against Mordecai.** V. 10. **Nevertheless, Haman refrained himself,** he could not afford to fly into a rage at this time; **and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh, his wife,** inviting them to hear of his good fortune and to give him sympathetic advice. V. 11. **And Haman,** puffed up with boastful pride, **told them of the glory of his riches,** one factor which made for his happiness, **and the multitude of his children,** a great number of sons being considered a great blessing, also among the heathen Persians, **and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king,** this recent advancement being very flattering to his ambitious vanity. V. 12. **Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther, the queen, did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself,** this being the very highest point of distinction; **and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.** V. 13. **Yet all this availeth me nothing,** it could not satisfy him, he could not enjoy it with the proper degree of calm satisfaction, **so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate,** the fact that this member of a despised nation, of a race of slaves, could defy him by refusing to give him the honor he desired, galled him and spoiled the enjoyment of all his blessings. V. 14. **Then said Zeresh, his wife, and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high,** the great height serving to emphasize the execution and its disgrace, **and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon,** there being no doubt in their mind that this request would readily be granted. **Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet,** his enjoyment undisturbed by a single thought of the hateful Jew. **And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made,** erected before his very house, all ready for the execution which he hoped to bring about on the next day. Thus the supposed luck of the godless makes them secure and prepares them for the destruction which the Lord has appointed for them.

CHAPTER 6.

Mordecai Rewarded by Ahasuerus.

THE KING ASKS HAMAN'S ADVICE. — V. 1. **On that night could not the king sleep,** literally, "fled away the sleep of the king," **and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles,** the annals of the kingdom, in which all events worthy of interest were entered by scribes or chroniclers appointed for that purpose; **and they were read before the king,** the reading evidently continuing through the entire night. V. 2. **And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door,** porters at the royal threshold, **who sought to lay hand on the King Ahasuerus,** chap. 2, 21. 22. V. 3. **And the king said, What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?** He implied that it was self-evident that a royal reward should be assigned to Mordecai. **Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him,** he had not in any manner been requited for his special service. V. 4. **And the king said, Who is in the court?** that is, what officer of higher standing is on duty or present at this time? **Now, Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house,** thus early in the morning, **to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.** He had come practically at the dawn of day, since his hatred of Mordecai would not permit him to rest. V. 5. **And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in,** namely, into the apartments of the king, since he was probably reclining on his bed. V. 6. **So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?** This was done in accordance with the Oriental custom which lets the royal courtiers name the rewards for special services. **Now, Haman,** puffed up with his own vanity, **thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?** The Hebrew implies that Haman thought it impossible for the king to go beyond him, to slight and disregard him at this time. V. 7. **And Haman answered the king,** stating what he desired for himself, **For the man whom the king delighteth to honor,** v. 8. **let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear,** a dress which he had actually worn, the wearing of which by any other person was the very highest honor, **and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head,** the royal steeds wearing an ornament upon their heads which had the shape of a diadem or crown; v. 9. **and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor,** the prince acting as a servant in this instance, **and bring him on horseback through the street of the city,** riding up and down through the chief thoroughfares, **and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.** The unbelievers have only the honor of this world before their eyes, but even in these hopes they are often disappointed and brought to disgrace.

MORDECAI HONORED. — V. 10. **Then the king said to Haman,** who himself was a prince of the realm, **Make haste and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai, the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate,** whose nationality was hereby openly stated, in spite of the decree which looked toward the destruction of the Jews, the hand of Providence thus appearing throughout the story. **Let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken,** not a single point was to be omitted in all the excessive show of honor which Haman had sought for his own person. V. 11. **Then took Haman the apparel and the horse,** surely with inexpressible bitterness in his heart, **and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor.** The humiliation was all the greater, so far as Haman was concerned, because he now had to act as servant to the despised and hated Jew. V. 12. **And Mordecai came again to the king's gate,** the entire city knowing of the honor which had been bestowed upon him. **But Haman hasted to his house mourning and having his head covered,** in token of the deep shame and disgrace which, he felt, was resting upon him. V. 13. **And Haman told Zeresh, his wife, and all his friends,** the men who usually hover about a powerful person while he is in the good graces of the sovereign, **everything that had befallen him,** the report differing materially from that made the day before. **Then said his wise men and Zeresh, his wife, unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews before whom thou hast begun to fall,** namely, by being obliged to act as his servant, **thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.** This conclusion they drew from the trend of circumstances, for they could not be blind to the fact that the Jews were under special divine protection. V. 14. **And while they were yet**

talking with him, came the king's chamberlains and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared, for the Oriental custom required a special message to be sent to the guests just before the hour appointed for a feast to announce that all things were now ready. Cp. Matt. 22, 3. 4; Luke 14, 17. That is the final reward of the unbelievers, particularly of those who persecute the Church of God: they fall before His might and will finally sink into everlasting destruction.

CHAPTER 7.

The Fall of Haman.

ESTHER PLEADS FOR HER PEOPLE. — V. 1. **So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther, the queen,** the drinking after the feast being regarded as the most important part of the entertainment. V. 2. **And the king,** being more anxious even than on the day before to find out Esther's request, **said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine,** repeating his promise in practically the same words, **What is thy petition, Queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee; and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.** She had but to name her desire, and the king would place all his resources at her command. V. 3. **Then Esther, the queen,** all her pent-up emotions breaking forth with a sudden rush of words, **answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request;** she pleaded with the king that her own life and that of her race might be spared, saved from the impending calamity; v. 4. **for we are sold, I and my people,** a very fitting expression, since Haman had paid a large sum of money into the royal treasury to bring about the extermination of the Jews, **to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish,** the heaping of the words showing the depth of her own emotions, and being intended to awaken similar feelings in the heart of the king. **But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen,** if the scheme had implied only slavery for herself and her people, **I had held my tongue,** unwilling to bother the king on that score alone, **although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage,** that is, in the circumstances the punishment of the enemy must be considered less important than the averting of the damage which the king would suffer. Esther thus stated that all other considerations were secondary with her to the one great need of preserving the interests of the king, since all the gold which the enemy might pay would not compensate for the loss of the services which her people rendered to the empire. V. 5. **Then the King Ahasuerus,** filled with the greatest agitation on account of the condition revealed by Esther's words, **answered and said unto Esther, the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?** literally, "Who has filled his heart to do so?" For it must have been a heart of extraordinary wickedness which could have thought out such a devilish scheme. V. 6. **And Esther,** now fully sure of her ground, **said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.** It was a moment of most dramatic intensity when Esther thus denounced the man who was filled with such enmity toward the Jews. **Then Haman was afraid,** he trembled for fear, **before the king and the queen,** for he had some premonition of what his fate would be. Thus Esther placed her position and her very life in jeopardy for the sake of her people. In the same way all believers who occupy positions of honor and power have the duty to use their influence in the interest of their fellow-believers.

HAMAN HANGED ON HIS OWN GALLOWS. — V. 7. **And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden,** for he was so filled with agitation that he must needs take a turn in the royal park. **And Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther, the queen,** for he realized that this was his one chance of salvation; **for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king,** that sentence upon him had virtually been pronounced. V. 8. **Then the king returned out of the palace garden,** where he had gone to recover from the first burst of anger, **into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was.** In his importunate pleading for his life he had kneeled down before Esther and had then fallen forward with the upper part of his body on the sofa on which Esther reclined at the meal. **Then said the king,** now altogether beside himself with anger, **Will he force the queen also before me in the house?** The king took this act of Haman's to be an outrage on the modesty of the queen and a serious offense against the respect due to himself. **As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face,** it being the custom to veil the face of a condemned criminal as no longer worthy of looking at the king. V. 9. **And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king,** in revealing the plot against the king's life, **standeth in**

the house of Haman. His words suggested, of course, that it was more fit for Haman to be hanged on the high gallows which he had erected than for Mordecai. **Then the king said, Hang him thereon.** V. 10. **So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai,** his feet thus being taken in the net which he had hidden for another, Ps. 9, 15. **Then was the king's wrath pacified.** That is the final fate of the enemies of the Church, a dreadful and terrible end, in the depths of shame and disgrace.

CHAPTER 8.

The Jews Receive Permission to Revenge Themselves.

Mordecai Advanced. — V. 1. **On that day did the King Ahasuerus give the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, unto Esther, the queen;** his property having been confiscated, the king gave it to Esther as a kind of compensation for the peril which she had suffered. **And Mordecai came before the king;** for **Esther had told what he was unto her;** on the strength of his relationship to the queen he was made one of the officers belonging to the inner circle surrounding the king. V. 2. **And the king took off his ring, his sealring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai,** thereby promoting him to the position and the dignity which Haman had formerly held. **And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman,** as her steward, to manage the big estate which had been given to her by the king. V. 3. **And Esther spake yet again before the king and fell down at his feet,** in an attitude of the most humble pleading, **and besought him with tears,** imploring him as she wept, **to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews,** for the murderous decree was still in force, having not been repealed. V. 4. **Then the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther,** to indicate that he was ready to grant her request. **So Esther arose and stood before the king,** in order to discuss ways and means of undoing the mischief wrought by Haman's scheme, v. 5. **and said, If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king,** her prudence, as usual, causing her to be most modest in presenting her request, **and I be pleasing in his eyes,** her appeal to his regard for her coming last, **let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces;** for unless the decree would be repealed, the enemies of the Jews would still be able to effect their destruction; v. 6. **for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?** Her words state, in the most emphatic manner, that she would never be able to stand it, to live through such a calamity. That is the proper attitude for a Christian to take, a real live, personal interest in the welfare of those of the household of faith, a true grieving with those that weep.

The Decree of Ahasuerus and Its Effect. V. 7. **Then the King Ahasuerus said unto Esther, the queen, and to Mordecai, the Jew,** in granting the request of Esther, **Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows because he laid his hand upon the Jews.** V. 8. **Write ye also for the Jews as it liketh you,** as they thought best in the circumstances, **in the king's name and seal it with the king's ring, which had a seal on it; for the writing which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring may no man reverse.** It seems, then, that the king could not directly reverse or recall the decree which had been issued; but he could have a second decree issued, which would have the effect of annulling the provisions of that sent out at Haman's suggestion. V. 9. **Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof, fully two months** after Haman's edict of extermination; **and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India,** on the eastern boundary of the great Persian empire, **unto Ethiopia,** in Northeastern Africa, **an hundred twenty and seven provinces,** for the larger satrapies were divided into smaller sections, **unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.** Cp. chap. 1, 22; 3, 12. V. 10. **And he,** Mordecai, **wrote in the King Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring,** as he had been empowered to do, **and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries,** for the post-system of the empire was both extensive and effective, v. 11. **wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together,** such an act not being accounted a disturbance of the peace, **and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them,** whose

enmity would cause them to make use of the provisions of Haman's decree, **both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,** v. 12. **upon one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar,** the very day which had been named for the destruction of the Jews in the original decree. V. 13. **The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people,** made known to them by means of the copies posted throughout the empire, **and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies,** not merely in self-defense, but with the right to attack any hostile party. V. 14. **So the posts,** the king's messengers, **that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan, the palace,** being sent forth from this residence of the king. V. 15. **And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white,** these being the royal colors of Persia, **and with a great crown of gold, a** golden band, or coronet, **and with a garment of fine linen and purple,** his state robes as first minister of the court. **And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad,** the sympathy of the inhabitants evidently being on the side of Esther. V. 16. **The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor,** in contrast to the darkness of the pall which had but recently hung above them. V. 17. **And in every province and in every city whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day,** for the threatening peril had been averted, which was reason enough for a holiday. **And many of the people of the land became Jews,** became proselytes to the Jewish faith; **for the fear of the Jews fell upon them,** they saw in all these events the ruling hand of God and therefore acknowledged Him who was so evidently on the side of the Jews. In the time of the New Testament also there are special times of grace, when God does great things for His Church, and therefore many hearts are turned to Him in true faith.

CHAPTER 9.

The Revenge of the Jews.

THE ENEMIES SLAIN. — V. 1. **Now, in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar,** the last month of the Jewish church-year, **on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution,** namely, that which had been engineered by the crafty Haman, **in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them,** (though it was turned to the contrary, **that the Jews had rule over them that hated them,** the provisions of the first decree being neutralized by those of the second edict as sent out by Mordecai,) v. 2. **the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus,** as they had received permission to do, chap. 8, 11, **to lay hand on such as sought their hurt,** who would take advantage of the original order, which could not be reversed outright. **And no man could withstand them; for the fear of them,** by virtue of the providence of God, which was so clearly evident in the trend of events, **fell upon all people.** V. 3. **And all the rulers of the provinces,** the national princes, **and the lieutenants,** the satraps of the larger divisions of the empire, **and the deputies,** the governors appointed by the king, **and officers of the king,** all persons of rank who were directly in the king's employ, **helped the Jews,** furthering their cause in every conceivable manner, **because the fear of Mordecai,** whose power as grand vizier of the empire was practically limitless, **fell upon them.** V. 4. **For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces,** making it a dangerous matter for any one to come into conflict with his orders; **for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.** V. 5. **Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword,** inflicting a great defeat upon them, **and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them,** their enemies being helpless before them. V. 6. **And in Shushan, the palace,** the section of the capital where the royal palace was situated, **the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.** V. 7. **And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,** v. 8. **and Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,** v. 9. **and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha,** v. 10. **the ten sons of Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand,** they did not take advantage of this right which had been given them in the second decree, chap. 8, 11, their only object being to defend themselves. V. 11. **On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan, the palace, was brought before the king.** V. 12. **And the king said unto Esther, the queen,** by way of showing her that he had granted her a great favor in permitting his decree to go forth, **The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan, the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have**

they done in the rest of the king's provinces? He implied that the number of slain throughout his empire must be very great. **Now, what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee; or what is thy request further? and it shall be done.** He was ready to make still greater concessions, to grant still larger favors. V. 13. **Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree,** as a measure to prevent the outbreak of any further aggressions, to subdue the enemies for all time, **and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows,** their dead bodies being impaled or crucified with the intention of branding them with public disgrace as the enemies of the Jews. V. 14. **And the king commanded it so to be done. And the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.** V. 15. **For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar and slew three hundred men at Shushan,** this fact showing that the party of Haman had still been pretty strong, since fully eight hundred men were destroyed by the Jews; **but on the prey laid they not their hand,** they did not appropriate any of their property. V. 16. **But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together,** outside of those living at Shushan, **and stood for their lives and had rest from their enemies,** they succeeded in securing peace for themselves, **and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey,** v. 17. **on the thirteenth day of the month Adar,** this being the one day which the Jews of the provinces took for their revenge; **and on the fourteenth day of the same,** which was the second day of revenge for the Jews of Shushan, **rested they and made it a day of feasting and gladness,** rejoicing over their deliverance from the hands of their enemies. V. 18. **But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.** V. 19. **Therefore the Jews of the villages,** that dwelled in the unwalled towns, outside the capital, **made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day,** a special holiday, **and of sending portions one to another,** making presents as an expression of joy and thankfulness. God, who is the great Judge and Revenger, has often given His people the victory over their enemies. And on the Last Day all the enemies will be overthrown, and the Church of God will have rest and peace throughout eternity.

The Purim Festival Instituted. — V. 20. **And Mordecai wrote these things,** a full account of all these happenings, **and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,** wherever there were colonies and congregations of his countrymen, v. 21. **to stablish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,** making the celebration of the festival an event occupying two days, v. 22. **as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies,** when their deliverance from their oppressors brought them lasting peace, **and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy and from mourning into a good day, that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor,** as manifestations of their great thankfulness. V. 23. **And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun,** the first celebration having already taken place in an outburst of spontaneous joy, **and as Mordecai had written unto them,** v. 24. **because Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot,** this being done through the astrologers and magicians, chap. 3, 7, **to consume them,** crush them out of existence, **and to destroy them;** v. 25. **but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his,** Haman's, **wicked device which he devised against the Jews should return upon his own head,** that he be caught in his own net, **and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows,** these two commands, as they were directed to the queen, being given in direct speech. V. 26. **Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur,** the word for the lot which Haman had used in trying to carry out his murderous scheme. **Therefore, for all the words of this letter,** which was sent out by Mordecai, **and of that which they had seen concerning this matter,** their own experience agreeing with the account as given by Mordecai, **and which had come unto them,** which they found out from other reliable sources, v. 27. **the Jews ordained and took upon them and upon their seed,** all their descendants, **and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail,** not be passed by and forgotten, **that they would keep these two days according to their writing and according to their appointed time every year,** the time of celebration being determined by the order of Mordecai; v. 28. **and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail,**

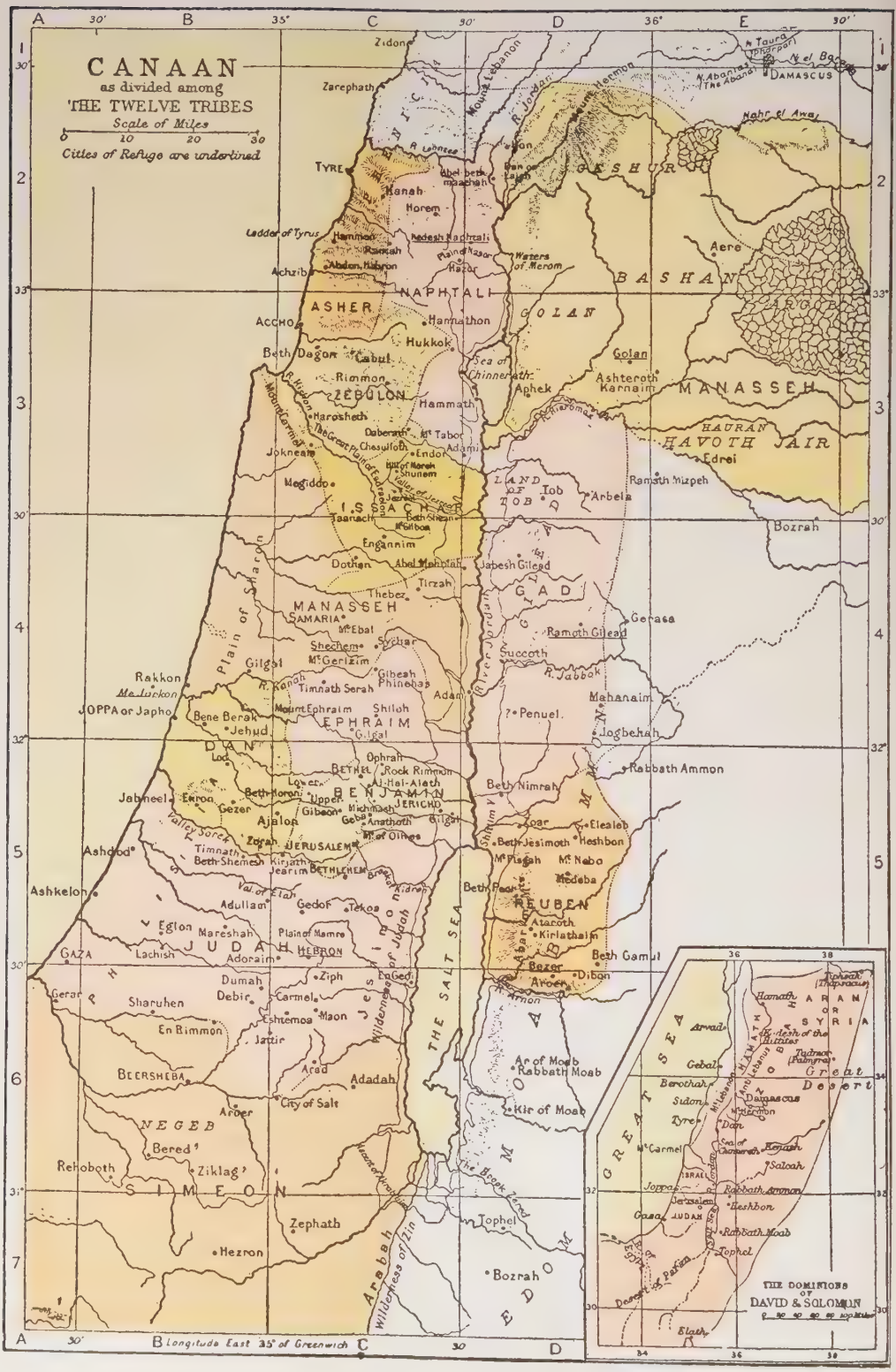
should never cease, **from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish,** come to an end, **from their seed.** V. 29. **Then Esther, the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai, the Jew, wrote with all authority,** with all emphasis, **to confirm this second letter of Purim,** the name of Mordecai giving the document full weight and legal power. The contents of this letter are not given, its existence being known to all Jews. V. 30. **And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,** since they were aimed at the welfare of Israel and were based upon facts, v. 31. **to confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai, the Jew, and Esther, the queen, had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed,** themselves perfectly willing to agree to the establishment of the new festival, **the matters of the fastings and their cry,** in remembrance of the lamentations which the Jews indulged in before they were delivered by the decree of Mordecai. V. 32. **And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book,** that which related the events connected with the establishment of the festival. The Feast of Esther, or that of Purim, is celebrated by the Jews to this day. "On both days of the feast the modern Jews read over the Megillah, or Book of Esther, in their synagogs. The copy read must not be printed, but written on vellum in the form of a roll; and the names of the ten sons of Haman are written on it in a peculiar manner, being ranged, they say, like so many bodies on a gibbet. The reader must pronounce all these names in one breath. Whenever Haman's name is pronounced, they make a terrible noise in the synagog. Some drum with their feet on the floor, and the boys have mallets with which they knock and make a noise. They prepare themselves for their carnival by a previous fast, which should continue three days, in imitation of Esther's; but they have mostly reduced it to one day."[2] It is perfectly right and proper that Christians celebrate also such festivals on which they remember some great teacher of the Church and the great things which the Lord did through such a chosen instrument of His grace, as in the case of Martin Luther.

2) Cp. Jennings, *Jewish Antiquities.*

CHAPTER 10.

The Extent of Mordecai's Power.

V. 1. **And the King Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land,** a special tax exacted from all parts of his great empire, **and upon the isles of the sea,** as far as his influence extended. V. 2. **And all the acts of his power and of his might and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai whereunto the king advanced him,** for the power of Mordecai grew with that of his sovereign, whose grand vizier, or prime minister, he was, **are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?** Any one desiring further information could find it in the public records. V. 3. **For Mordecai, the Jew, was next unto King Ahasuerus, a power next to the king in the empire, and great among the Jews,** influential also among his own countrymen, **and accepted of the multitude of his brethren,** occupying a representative position among them, **seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his seed;** for he always took care to have his position in the empire redound to the benefit of his people. It is the duty of all believers to seek the peace of the city, but, above all, that of their people, of the Church of Christ, whose welfare they should endeavor to promote also by means of their secular calling.


CANAAN
as divided among
THE TWELVE TRIBES
Scale of Miles
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Cities of Refuge are underlined
ASHER
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EPHRAIM
DAN
BENJAMIN
JUDAH
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REUBEN
GAD
GOLAN
BASHAN
ARGOB
HAVOTH JAIR
MANASSEH
GILEAD
GESHUR
MAACHAH
NEGEB
Plain of Sharon
Valley of Jezreel
Valley of Jordan
Wilderness of Judah
Wilderness of Zin
Arabah
THE SALT SEA
R. Jordan
R. Jabbok
R. Arnon
R. Kanah
R. Kishon
Mount Lebanon
Mount Hermon
Mount Carmel
Mount Ephraim
Mount of Olives
Zidon
Zarephath
TYRE
Ladder of Tyrus
Achzib
Accho
Beth Dagon
Rimmon
Jokneam
Megiddo
Taanach
Engannim
Dothan
Thebez
Samaria
Shechem
Gilgal
Rakkon
Me Jarkon
JOPPA or Japho
Bene Berak
Jehud
Lod
Ophrah
Jabneel
Ekron
Gezer
Ajalon
Zorah
Timnath
Ashdod
Ashkelon
Gaza
Adullam
Eglon
Mareshah
Lachish
Adoraim
Dumah
Debir
Gerar
Sharuhen
En Rimmon
Jattir
Beersheba
Aroer
Bered
Rehoboth
Ziklag
Zephath
Hezron
Tophel
Bozrah
Zaanaim
Kedesh Naphtali
Hazor
Waters of Merom
Abel beth maachah
Ijon
Hanah
Horem
Hammon
Rakkath
Abdon
Hukkok
Hammathon
Sea of Chinnereth
Aphek
Golan
Ashteroth Karnaim
Edrei
Ramath Mizpeh
Arbela
Bozrah
Jabesh Gilead
Ramoth Gilead
Gerasa
Succoth
Penuel
Mahanaim
Jogbehah
Rabbath Ammon
Beth Nimrah
Heshbon
Elealeh
Mt Nebo
Medeba
Beth Peor
Aroer
Dibon
Ataroth
Kirlathaim
Beth Gamul
Bezer
Ar of Moab
Rabbath Moab
Kir of Moab
Beth Jesimoth
Mt Pisgah
Jericho
Gilgal
Beth Horon
Upper
Lower
Gibeon
Michmash
Geba
Anathoth
Mt of Olives
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Kirjath Jearim
Timnath Serah
Beth Shemesh
Shiloh
Adam
Tirzah
Taanach
Beth Shean
Mt Gilboa
Jezreel
Valley of Jezreel
Plain of Esdraelon
Chesulloth
Daberath
Mt Tabor
Adami
Shunem
Endor
Nain
Hill of Moreh
Gilboa
Mt Gerizim
Timnath Serah
Gibeah Phinehas
Ophrah
Rock Rimmon
Al-Hal-Alath
Beth Horon
Michmash
Geba
Anathoth
Gilgal
Mt of Olives
Kirjath Jearim
Bethlehem
Brook Kidron
Valley of Hinnom
Valley of Elah
Gedor
Tekoa
Ziph
En Gedi
Maon
Carmel
Eshtemoa
Arad
Adadah
City of Salt
Aroer
Ziklag
Zephath
Hezron
Tophel
Bozrah
Edom
Moab
Ammon
Gilead
Bashan
Argob
Havoth Jair
Manasseh
Land of Tob
Geshur
Maachah
Naphtali
Asher
Zebulon
Issachar
Dan
Ephraim
Judah
Simeon
Reuben
Gad
Manasseh
Benjamin
Longitude East 35° of Greenwich
THE DOMINIONS OF DAVID & SOLOMON
Great Desert
Great Sea
Arvad
Gebal
Berothah
Sidon
Tyre
Dan
Mt Carmel
Joppa
Jerusalem
Gaza
Judah
Israel
Damascus
Hamath
Zobah
Tadmor Palmyra
Aram or Syria
Euphrates
Desert of Arabia
Elath
Rabbath Ammon
Heshbon
Rabbath Moab
Tophel
Kedesh of the Hittites
Thapsacus
Tiphsah
Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Hermon
Abana
Pharpar
Damascus
Nahr el Awaj
Aere

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